こうの史代
夕凪の街 桜の国

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Hiroshima, 1955.

Ten years after her city was consumed by a scorching flash of light, a young woman's soul is still deeply shaken by the earth-shattering explosion that devastated her home and changed her life forever...

What impact did the war and the atomic bomb have on the most vulnerable? Fumiyo Kôno examines this question in her outstanding book—an award-winning, widely-discussed masterpiece!

Fumiyo Kôno
Biographical Outline

Born in Hiroshima in September 1968, Kôno began her career as a comic artist in 1995 with the short story "Machikado Hanadayori" (News of the Blossoming of the Street Corner Flowers). Her major work is *Pippira-chô* (Pippira Notes) (complete in two volumes). She enjoys frequenting the library and watching the sunset with her pet canary Tamanowo on her shoulder. Her favorite quote is "I have never felt much desire to write about the world's victorious and glorious people, but rather those whose true glory remains hidden." (André Gide)

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夕凪の街 桜の国

双葉社

The Town of Evening Calm, The Country of Cherry Blossoms

Fumiyo Kôno

Translation & Lettering by **NOMAD SOUL**

Proofreading by **EXEUNTSL**

katanoha.monkey-pirate.com

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The Country of Cherry Blossoms (Part 2)

Dedicated to all people who love the world, in which one finds Japan, in which one finds Hiroshima.

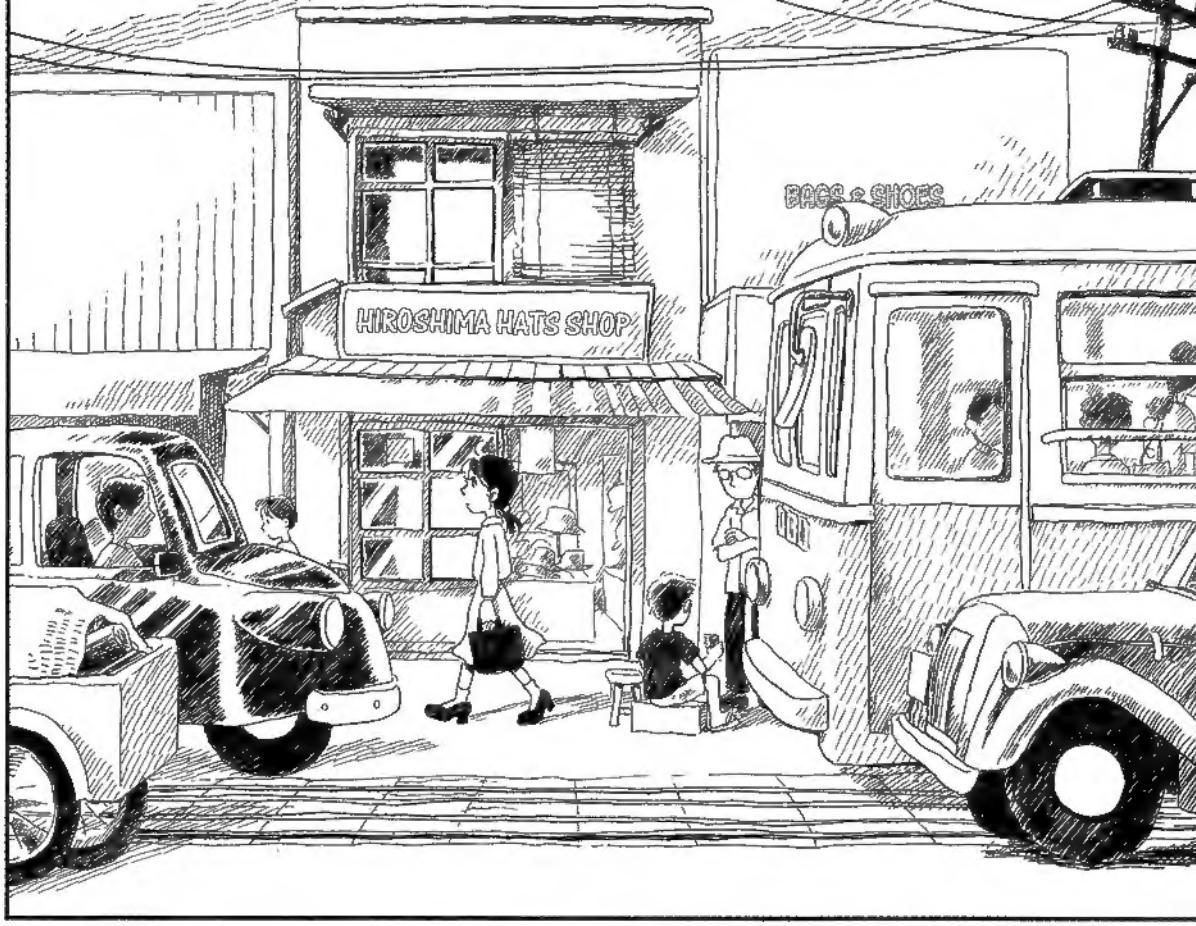
夕凪の街

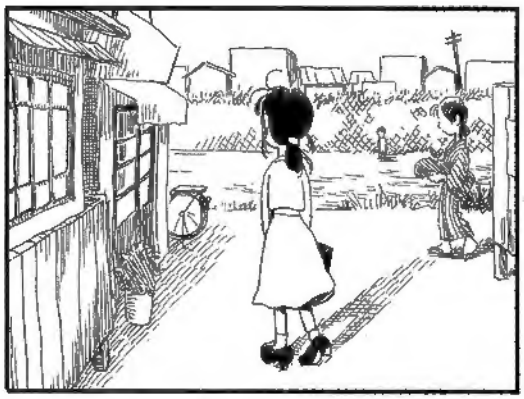
THE TOWN OF EVENING CALM

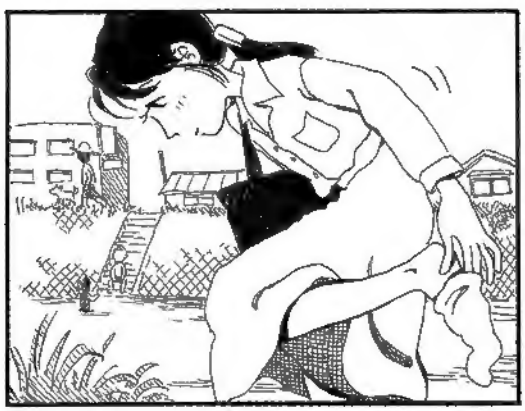
Note: The word *yûnagi* (evening calm) refers to a windless period in the evening at a coastal region during which the wind pattern shifts from a sea breeze to a land breeze.

Exactly... Now loosen the thread a lil' bit.
This way?
Done!
As like as two peas!!
FUJIWARA BOUTIQUE
Clothes & Accessories
Oh...
Here's the cutting pattern. You may have to trim it to fit your size, though.
Ha! Ha! I was only repeating what my mother taught me.
Thanks to you and your guidance, I was able to make this dress for a song.

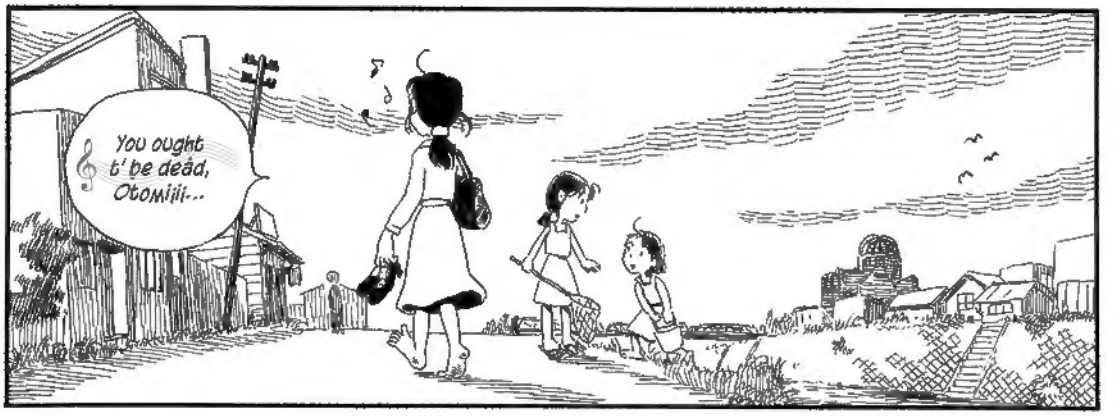
I'm sorry?
Aren't I right, Mr. Uchikoshi?
Aw, that's a shame! You'd look mighty swell in this dress.
Thank you, but I think I'll pass. Clumsy as I am ...
A...
Um...
Please, I said I'll pass!
He's the last person you should ask about fashion, Ms. Furuta.
Well, you know, I'm no expert at this kind of thing...
This is really no time to be indulging in a fashion show.
Good golly, look at the time!
But wait!
Huh?!
I'll go wash it.
Thank you kindly.
Not at all-- be my guest!
Anyway, Ms. Furuta, do you mind if I take this bamboo leaf?
See you tomorrow.

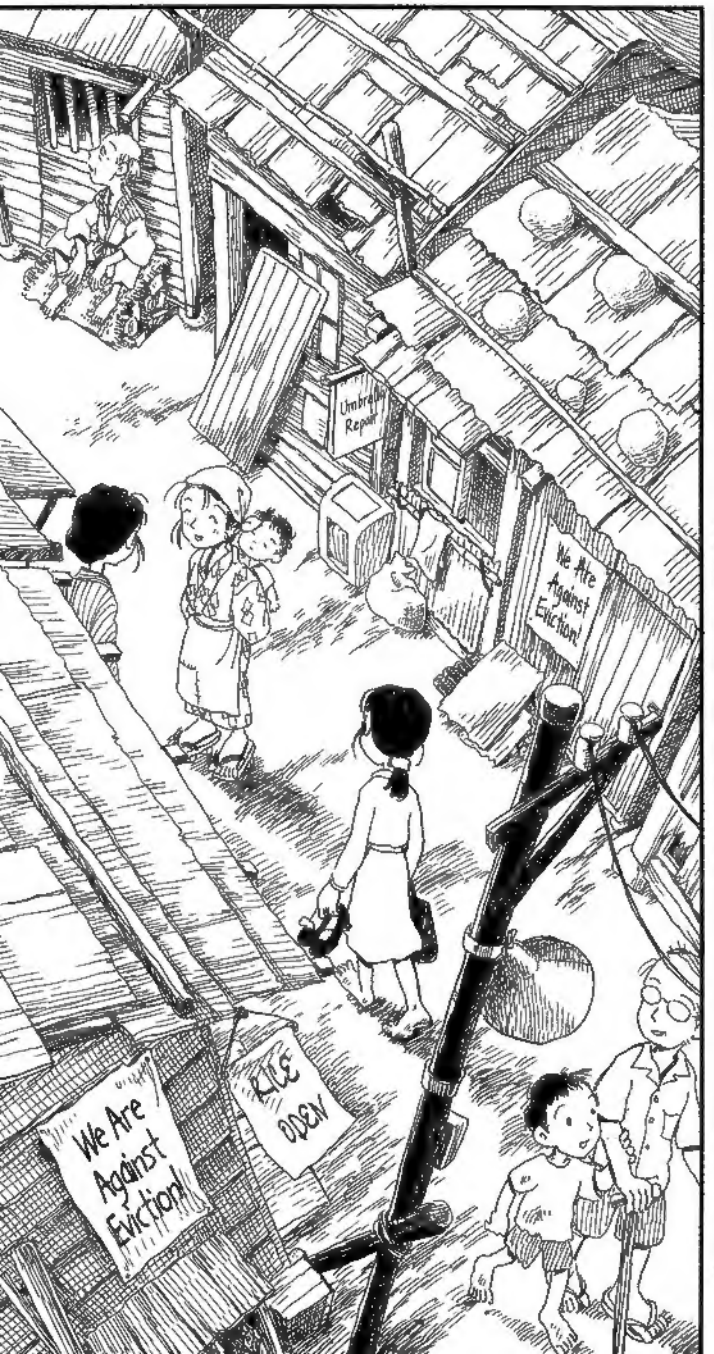

HIROSHIMA HATS SHOP
BAGS • SHOES

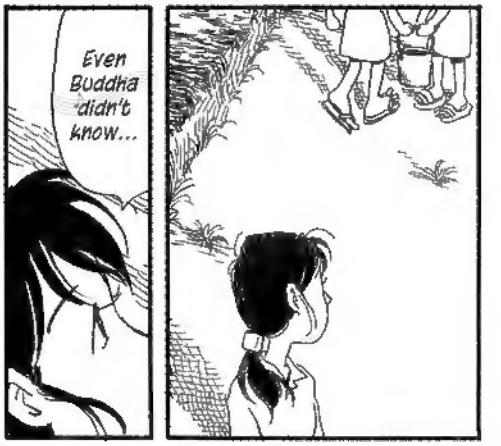


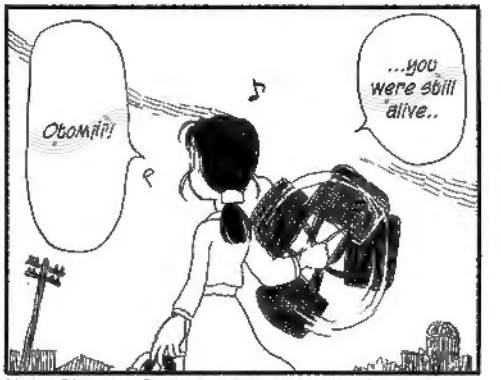


10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ATOMIC BOMB DROPPING
We need your help in order to make the World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs a success!
World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs Hiroshima Preparation Committee









(1) From "Otomi-san," a folk song about the heroine of a kabuki play (*Yowa Nasake Ukina no Yokogushi*, also known as *Otomi Yosaburō*). See Reader's Notes (RN) for more information.

Hello, Minami.
I'm home, Ma.
POST
1955
Addressee:
Fujimi and Hinami Hirano
From
Asahi Ishikawa, Mito City (1)
That's nice to hear.
Ms. Furuta was delighted with the finished dress!
Hey! Where are your manners, young lady?
Wouldn't it be great if he could play for the Carp[2]?
So Asahi's a member of a baseball team now
His handwriting's as bad as ever.

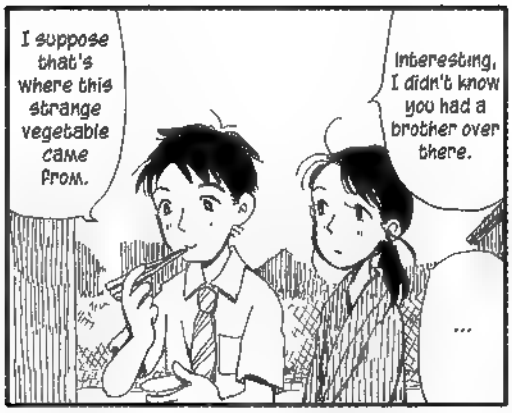
(1) Mito is the capital of Ibaraki prefecture, which is located in the northeastern part of the Kanto region.
(2) The Carp are Hiroshima's professional baseball team. See also RN

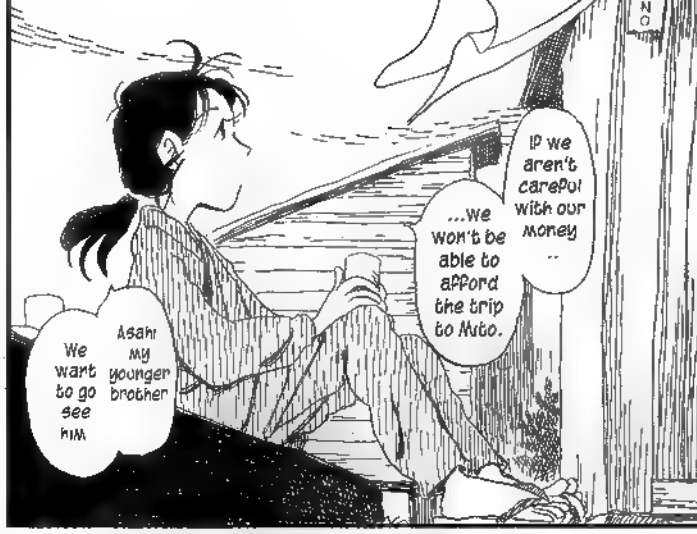
...
...
sip
A postcard. I need a postcard.
I'll write him back directly.
SHH
Gosh, it's started raining!
I've got to visit Aunt Ishikawa to pay back my tuition, anyhow...
I'll save up enough money and take you to see him soon!
Jus' a bit more patience, Ma!
Uh-huh.
Someone has to take a look at the roof...
PATTER
PATTER
SPLOSH
TUFF
TNK

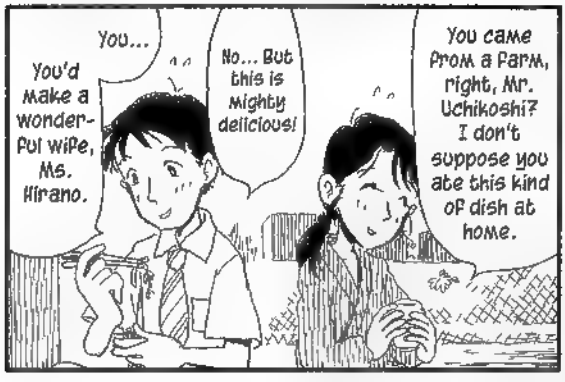
Yes?
Ms. Hirano.
You were absent today, so I came by to see how you're doing. Shouldn't you be in bed?
H-hello, Mr. Uchikoshi...
Oh my ...
Yes, it's no big deal. This kind of thing happens often.
I hope it's nothing serious.
Is that so?
My mother, she didn't feel well, so I took her to see the doctor.
No, I'm fine ...

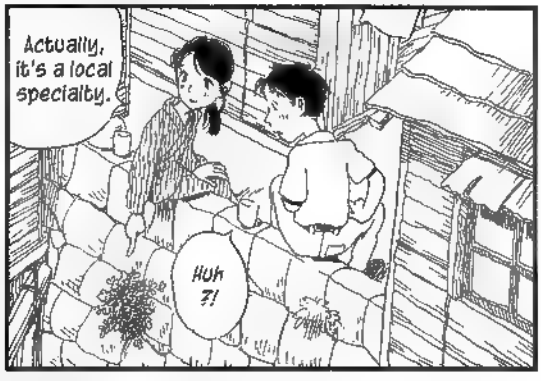
I'm sorry for the trouble. My mother is sleeping inside.
Or top of that, everything's still glistening after last night's shower.
Glistening?
...
...
Ha! Ha! Ha!
We had a bit of an invasion of slugs.
...
I wonder if Hasegawa[2] can break the 100-win record...
Sure he can.
D-do you think Kanayama[1] can reach 400 stolen bases?
I need them to make a pair of sandals. I don't want to wear out my shoes by using them on the way to and from work.
Well ...
By the way, Ms. Hirano, I've been wondering why you keep collecting those bamboo leaves. Is there a particular reason?

(1) Jirô Kanayama (金山次郎) was an infielder for the Hiroshima Carp. See also RN.
(2) Ryôhei Hasegawa (長谷川良平) was a pitcher for the Hiroshima Carp. See also RN.

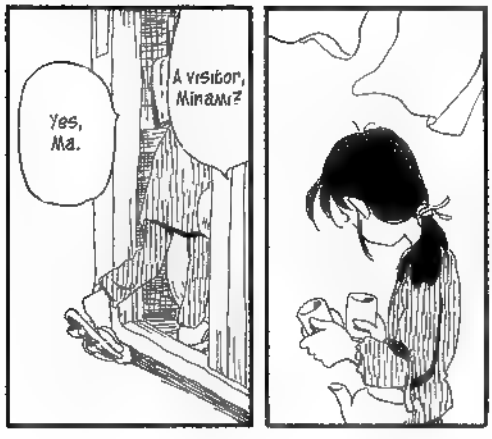

I suppose that's where this strange vegetable came from.
Interesting, I didn't know you had a brother over there.
...

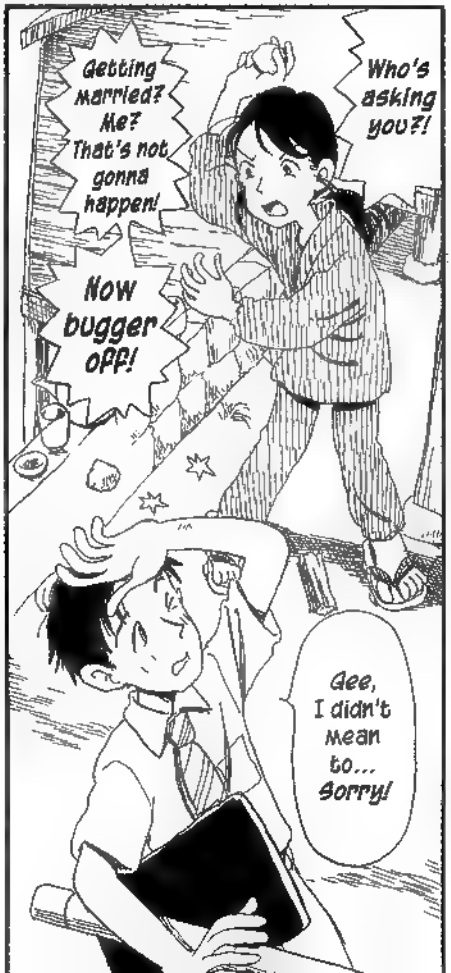

We want to go see him
Asahi my younger brother
...We won't be able to afford the trip to Muto.
If we aren't careful with our money...


You...
You'd make a wonderful wife, Ms. Hirano.
No... But this is mighty delicious!
You came from a farm, right, Mr. Uchikoshi? I don't suppose you ate this kind of dish at home.

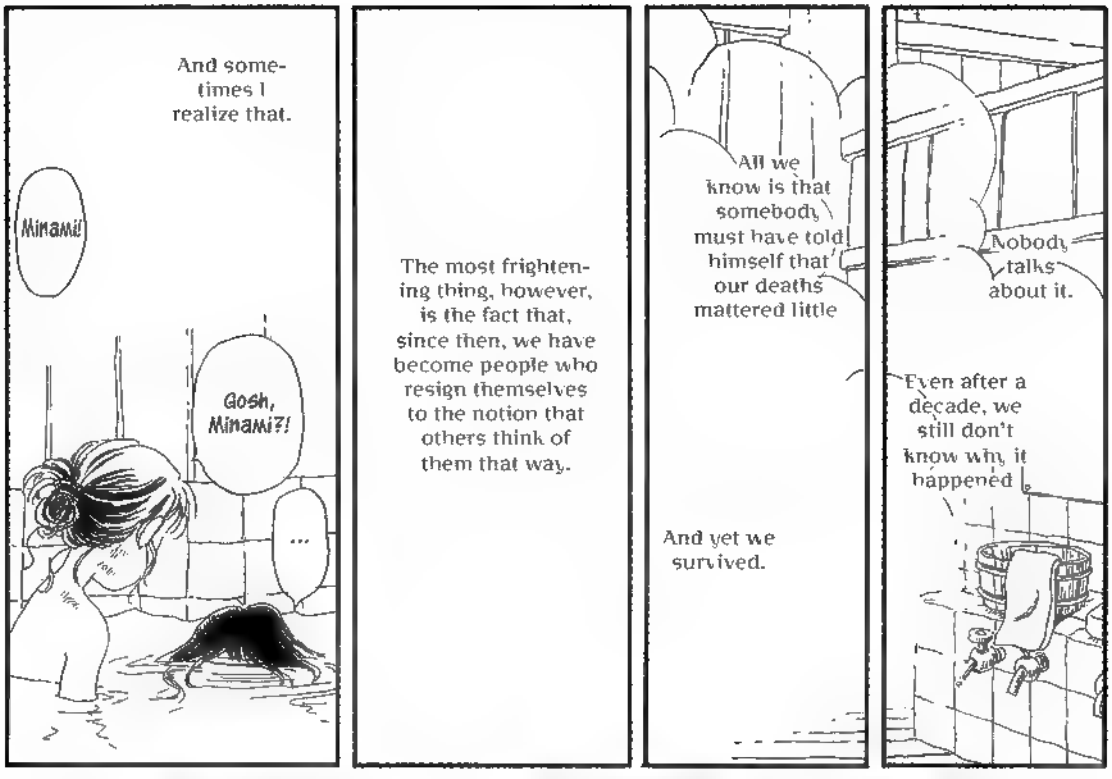

Actually, it's a local specialty.
Huh?!

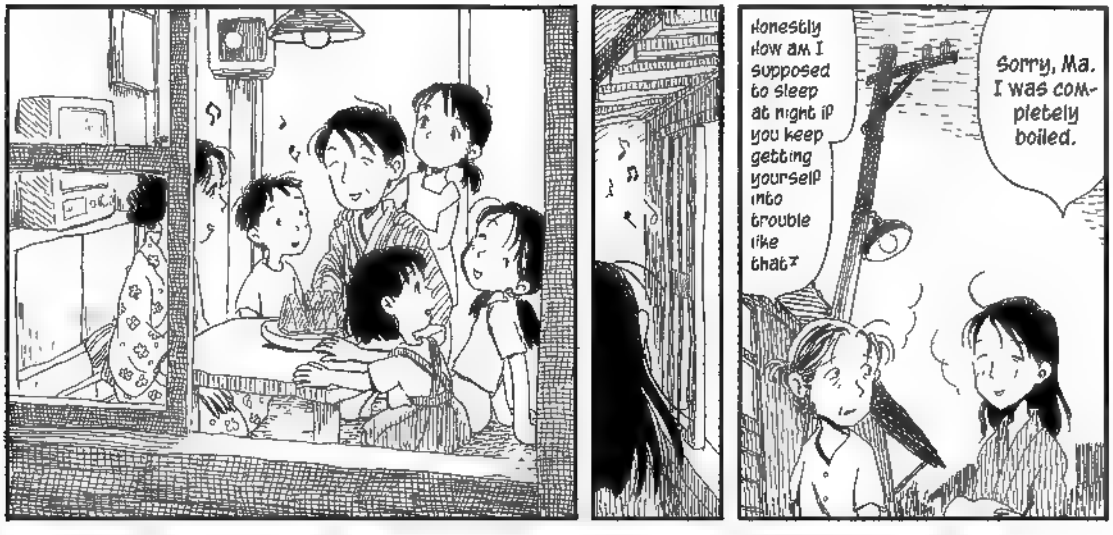
...
Sorry for bothering you.
Well, I have to get back to my rat killing now.


Yes, Ma.
A visitor, Minami?

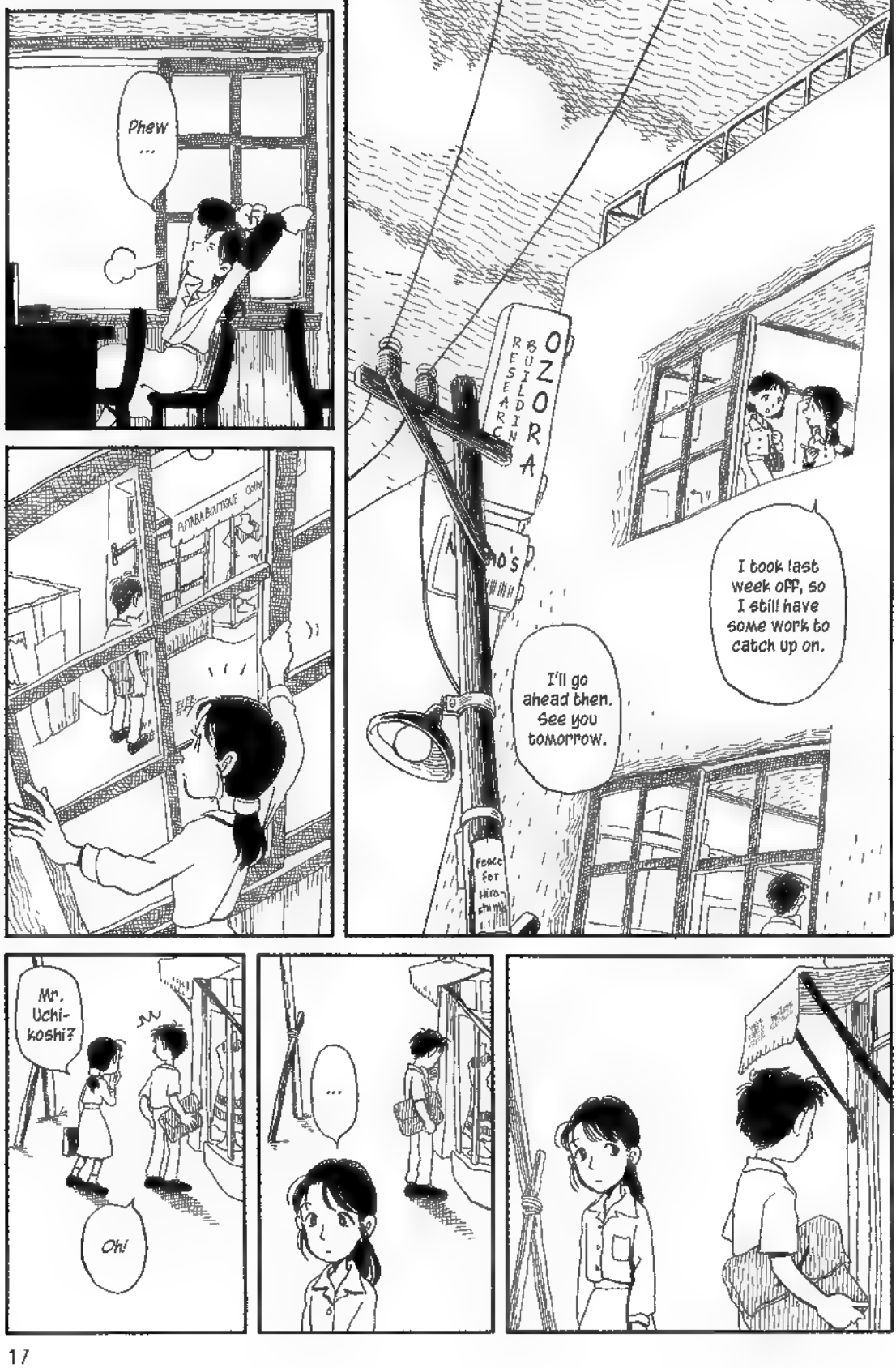

Getting married? Me? That's not gonna happen!
Who's asking you?!
Now bugger off!
Gee, I didn't mean to... Sorry!

HA! HA! HA!
Land o' Goshen! That'd be a disaster. Just imagine, me being mistaken for Marilyn Monroe!
That was a close shave! Seeing as how all our clothes were in the wash, he'd have found out that you slept in the buff, Ma.
Ah, this is paradise.
...
The people of this town are all unnatural.


And sometimes I realize that.
Minami!
Gosh, Minami?!
...
The most frightening thing, however, is the fact that, since then, we have become people who resign themselves to the notion that others think of them that way.
All we know is that somebody must have told himself that our deaths mattered little
And yet we survived.
Nobody talks about it.
Even after a decade, we still don't know why it happened


Honestly how am I supposed to sleep at night if you keep getting yourself into trouble like that?
Sorry, Ma. I was completely boiled.

(1) *Kayô Game* (The Pop Song Game) was a popular radio program. See also RN.


Phew ...
OZORA
RESEARCH BUILDING
I took last week off, so I still have some work to catch up on.
I'll go ahead then. See you tomorrow.
Peace for Hiroshima
Mr. Uchi-koshi?
Oh!
...

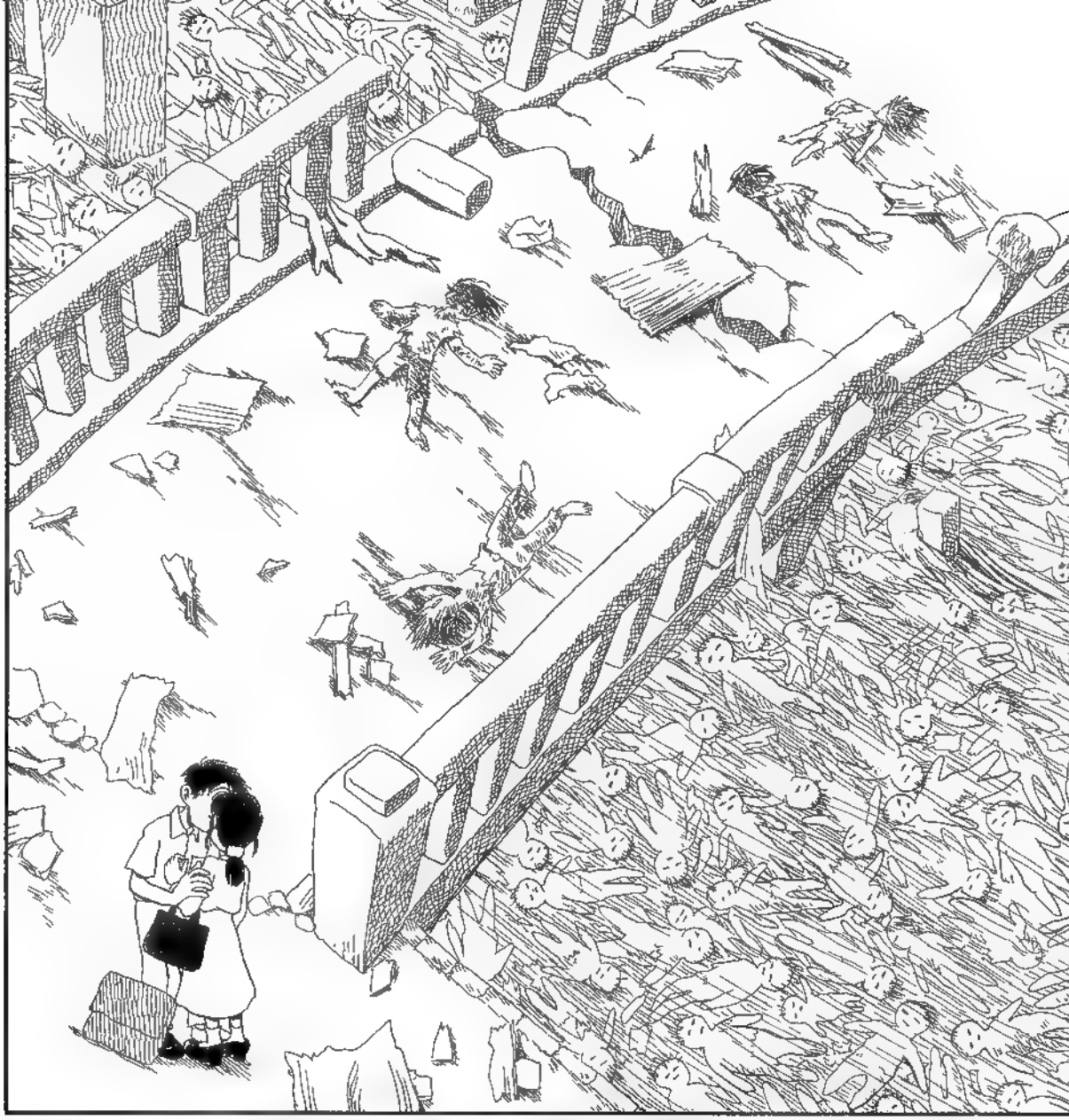
I... I'm looking for a present. For a person I like.
...
I'm listening.
Y-you came at just the right moment, Ms. Hirano. I could use your advice.
Besides, it's not like I talk about the Carp all the time!
Aw, how rude!
And here I thought the only things you were interested in were the Carp and Rikidōzan[1].
Hmph!
Yes? What?
Look, how about this one?
Oh, Mr. Uchikoshi...
Enough with that!!
I'm afraid not. I'll probably have to work overti--
I heard he'll have his next match at the Multipurpose Ground[2]. Will you go see it?
Well .. how about we talk about Rikidōzan, too, then?
FUTABA BO
OK, see you tomorrow.
I'll take this, please.
Mind your own business!
In case she rejects you and returns your present, you could still use it to wipe your tears.
A handkerchief?

(1) A Korean-born professional wrestler (1924-1963) who is considered one of the most influential figures in Japanese wrestling.
(2) The Hiroshima Prefectural Multipurpose Ground is a sports stadium. It was the former headquarters of the Hiroshima Carp. In addition to a baseball field, the stadium also has an athletic sports track, a tennis court and a sumo wrestling hall. See also RN.

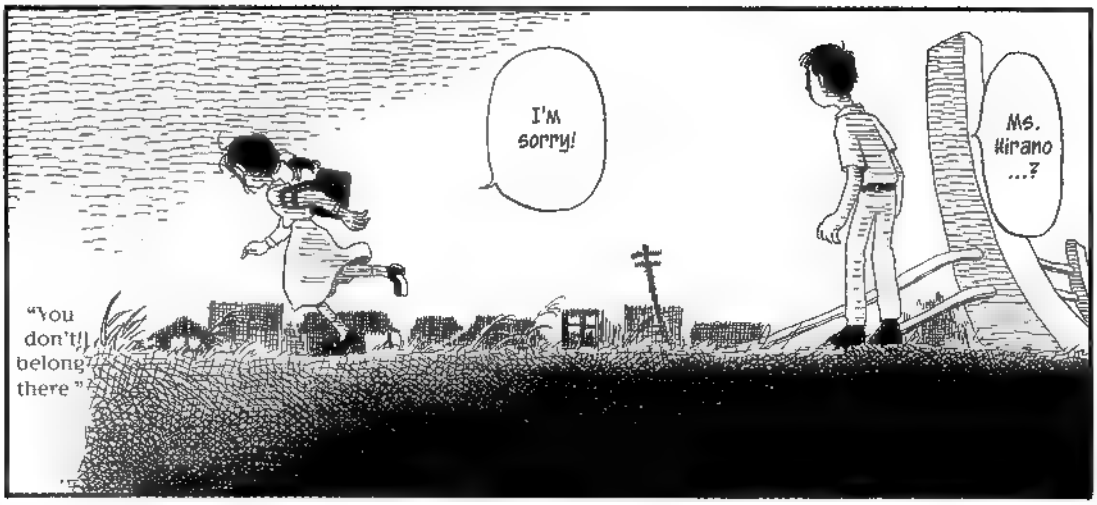
Ms. Hirano, please wait!
Thank you kindly!
Oh!
My grandmother sent me these from the farm. She made them herself. I'd like you to have them.
Please take this, too.
...
Consider it a thank-you present for the treat you gave me the other day.

?
My, they're wonderful! So comfortable!
I'm glad you like them.
Oops ...
Yes, I'm going to use them as models to make a second pair while they're new.
Are you taking them off already?
You will keep it, right?
No problem...
I'm sorry ...

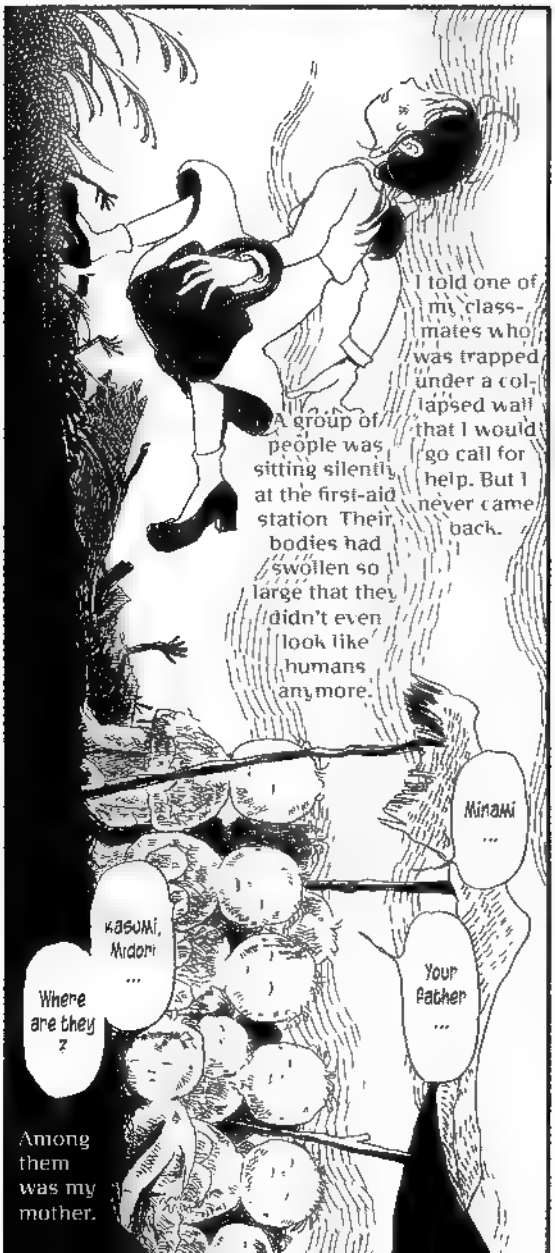
You will keep the handkerchief, right?
Thank you.
Yes ...

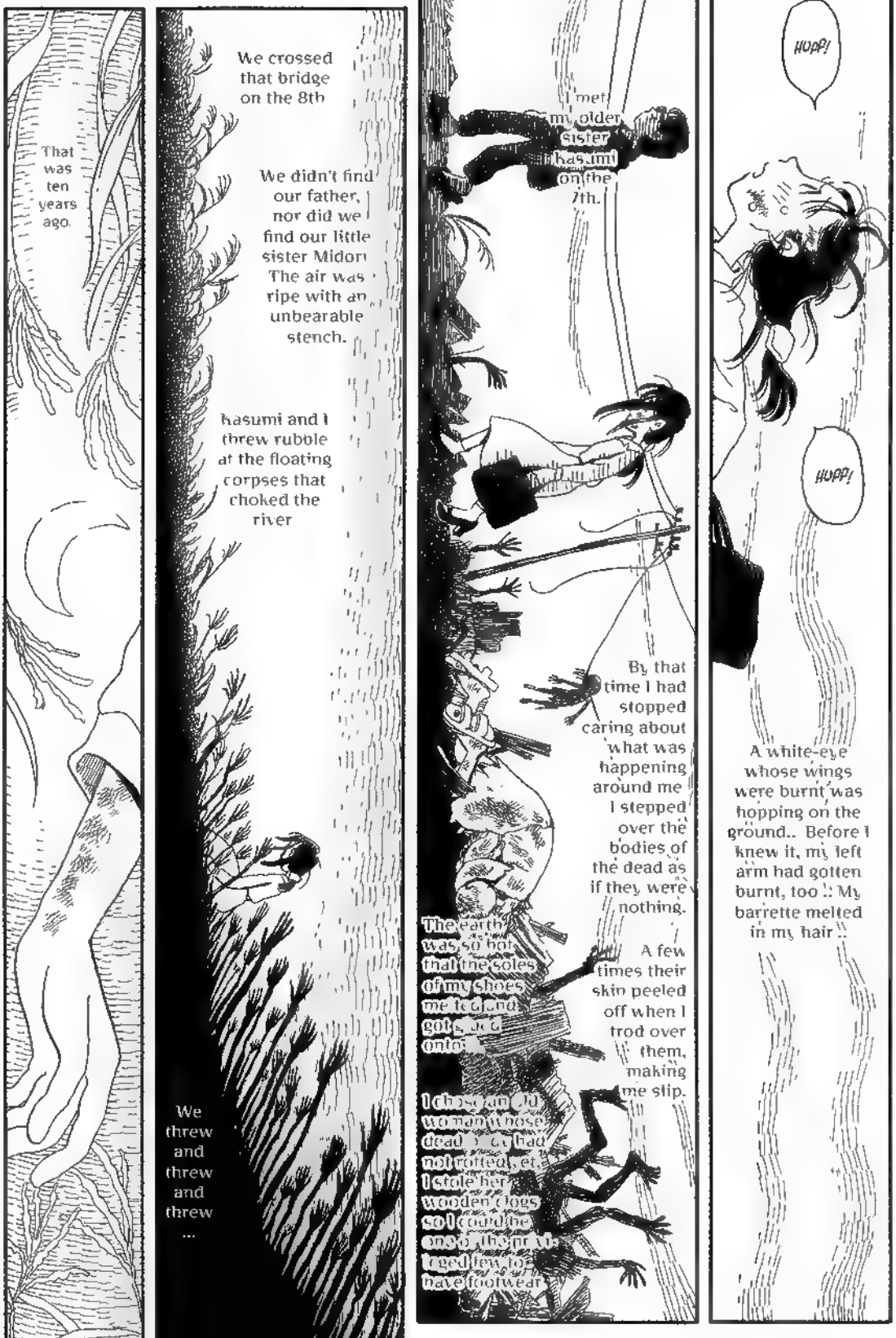


I'm sorry.
No, I can't ...



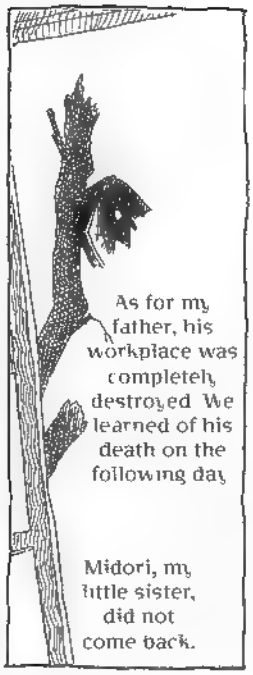
"That's not your world," I heard someone tell me.


I told one of my classmates who was trapped under a collapsed wall that I would go call for help. But I never came back.
A group of people was sitting silently at the first-aid station. Their bodies had swollen so large that they didn't even look like humans anymore.
Minami ...
Your father ...
Kasumi, Midori ...
Where are they?
Among them was my mother.


That was ten years ago.
We crossed that bridge on the 8th
We didn't find our father, nor did we find our little sister Midori. The air was ripe with an unbearable stench.
Hasumi and I threw rubble at the floating corpses that choked the river
We threw and threw and threw ...
I met my older sister Hasumi on the 7th.
By that time I had stopped caring about what was happening around me. I stepped over the bodies of the dead as if they were nothing.
The earth was so hot that the soles of my shoes melted and got stuck onto
A few times their skin peeled off when I trod over them, making me slip.
I chose an old woman whose dead body had not rotted yet. I stole her wooden clogs so I could be one of the rare few to have footwear
HUPP!
HUPP!
A white-eye whose wings were burnt was hopping on the ground.. Before I knew it, my left arm had gotten burnt, too !! My barrette melted in my hair !!

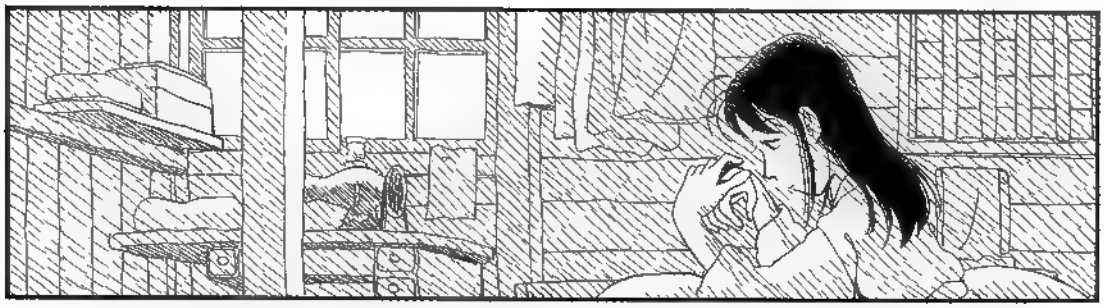
I'm home ...
My mother didn't see the things I saw
...
What the devil happened to you, Minami? You're covered with mud!
Her face was so swollen that she wasn't able to open her eyes an entire month
I fell.
Good night.
I'm tuckered out
All of this would become things of the past if I could just forget
Every time I think I'm happy .. Every time I think something is beautiful
.. all the memories of this beloved town and its people re-emerge ..
.. and my mind is thrown back to the day everything disappeared
"This is not your world," a voice then tells me

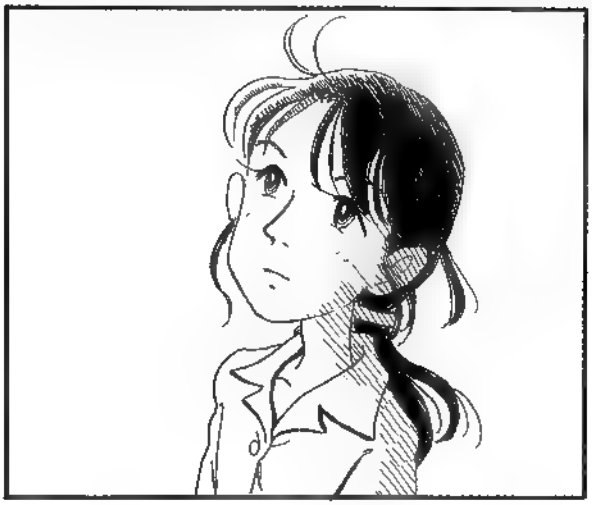
At the wish of my aunt and her husband, Asahi was adopted into their family.
My younger brother Asahi was sent to my aunt in Mito during the evacuation. When we came to pick him up five years later, he had become a completely different person. He refused to return to Hiroshima.


As for my father, his workplace was completely destroyed. We learned of his death on the following day.
Midori, my little sister, did not come back.

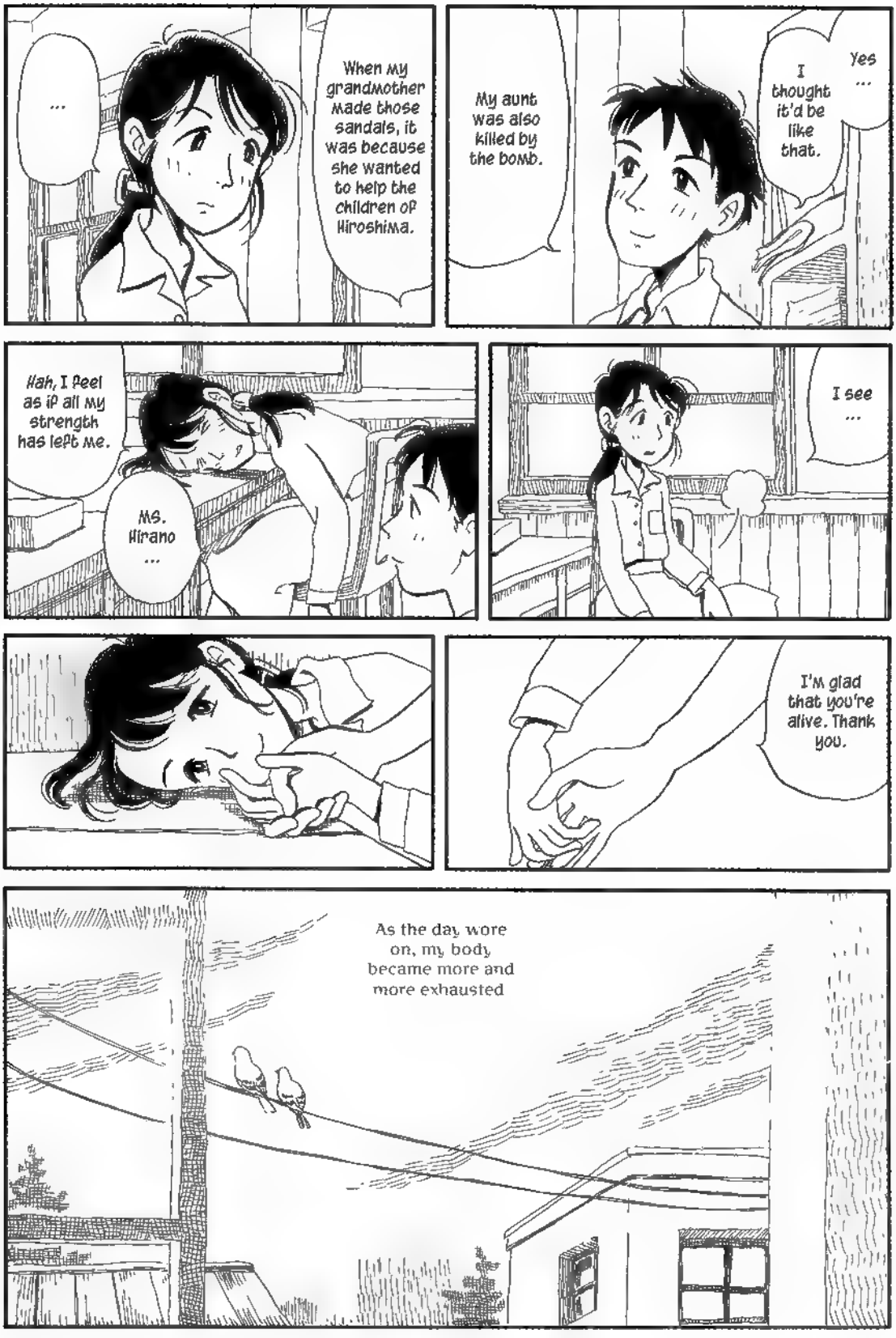
One week after the bomb fell, we took our mother back home, or what remained of it. With half of the house lying in ruin, we had to sleep in the entrance and on the veranda.

All of this would be things of the past if I could just forget.



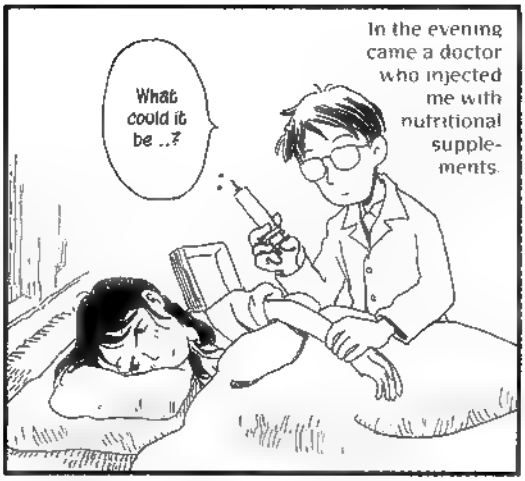


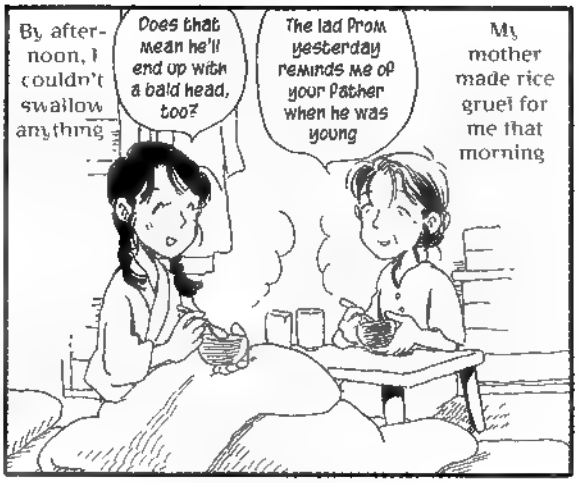
Good morning.
...
Mr. Uchi-koshi ...
I'm sorry about yes-terday. I won't do it again.
Please tell me that it's a good thing to be living in this world.
Please tell me ...
Then I might also be able to see you without feeling sorry for my sisters and all the others who were killed.
If I could do that I might finally be able to understand what it really means to be a survivor.
Please let me speak about what happened ten years ago.

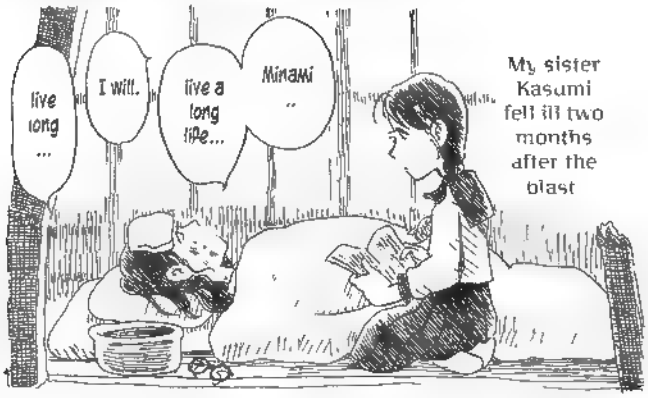

...
When my grandmother made those sandals, it was because she wanted to help the children of Hiroshima.
My aunt was also killed by the bomb.
I thought it'd be like that.
Yes ...
Hah, I feel as if all my strength has left me.
Ms. Hirano ...
I see ...
I'm glad that you're alive. Thank you.
As the day wore on, my body became more and more exhausted

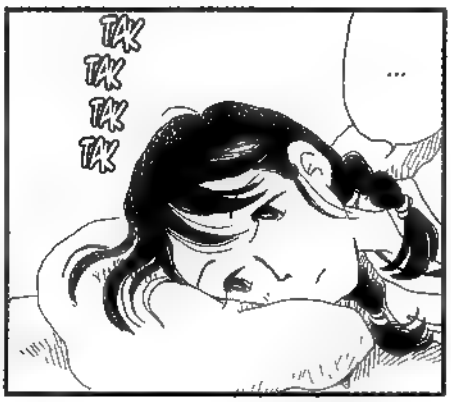
He called me by my first name
I know! That's what I've been saying!
Lord Almighty! You are really clumsy, Minami!
Hmm how do I go about this...?
You think so?
You look like you've been pulled through a knothole backwards
I took the next day off from work.
You ought to go back to bed. You need rest.
Thanks for coming by.
Tonight's the last time we see each other.
Since the moon is so blue...
...let's take a round-about way home
but was the first time I ever heard him sing
Don't forget the memories we made.
Along the tree-lined avenue, where I gave you my word.
Let's go home now, just the two of us!...
The next morning, I was unable to stand up.

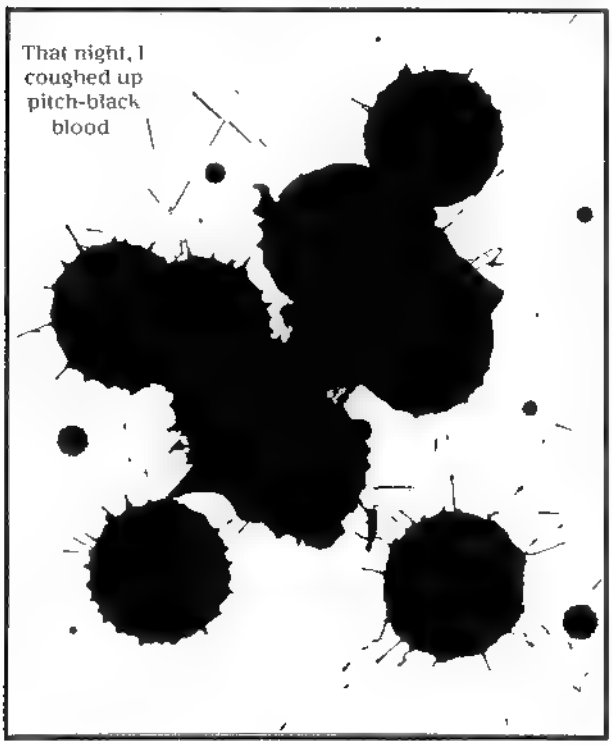
(1) From "Tsuki ga Tottemo Aoi Kara" (Since the Moon is So Blue), a hugely popular song released in 1955. See also RN.

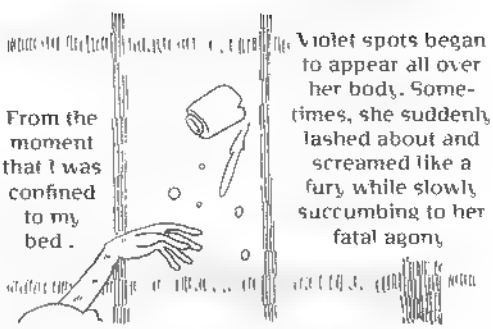

What could it be ..?
In the evening came a doctor who injected me with nutritional supplements.


By afternoon, I couldn't swallow anything
Does that mean he'll end up with a bald head, too?
The lad from yesterday reminds me of your father when he was young
My mother made rice gruel for me that morning


live long ...
I will.
live a long life...
Minami ..
My sister Kasumi fell ill two months after the blast


TAK TAK TAK TAK
...


That night, I coughed up pitch-black blood


From the moment that I was confined to my bed .
Violet spots began to appear all over her body. Sometimes, she suddenly lashed about and screamed like a fury, while slowly succumbing to her fatal agony

TAK TAK TAK TAK
. my mother and I had stopped talking about Kasumi.

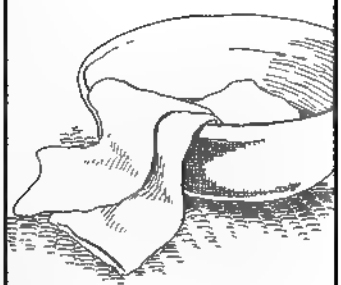
Minami, you must get well soon.

Let's go to Miyajima[1] again!

Several people came to visit me the next day.

Hang in there, Ms. Hirano.

I finally understood what my sister had tried to say. It was "I want to live a long life."



That was when I lost my eyesight.

Who was that person just now?

I brought you some flowers.

Mama ...

I knew that hand.

There was someone who held my hand silently.

I was afraid I would soil her dress that we had made together with blood.

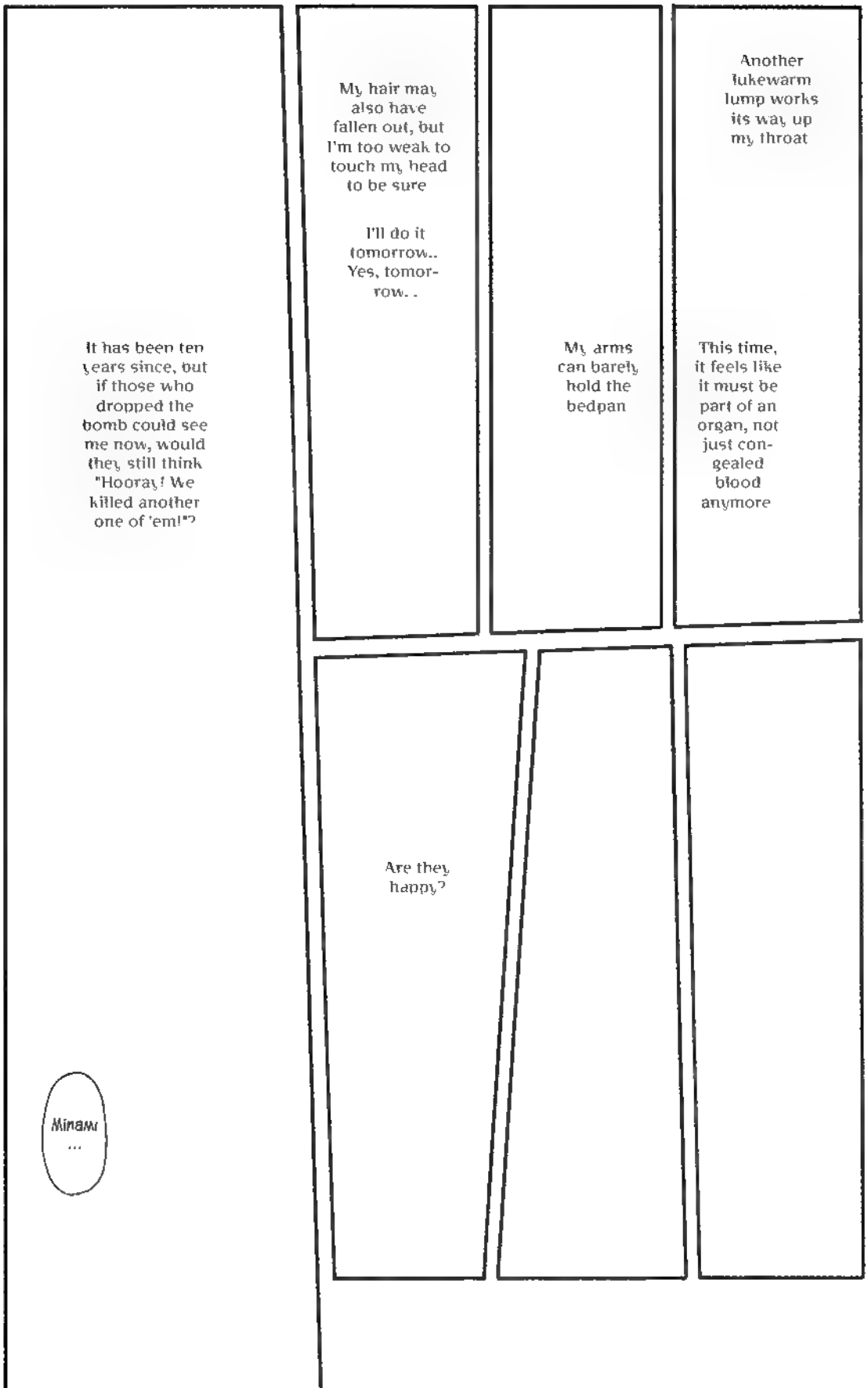
Ms. Hirano, it's me, Furuta ...

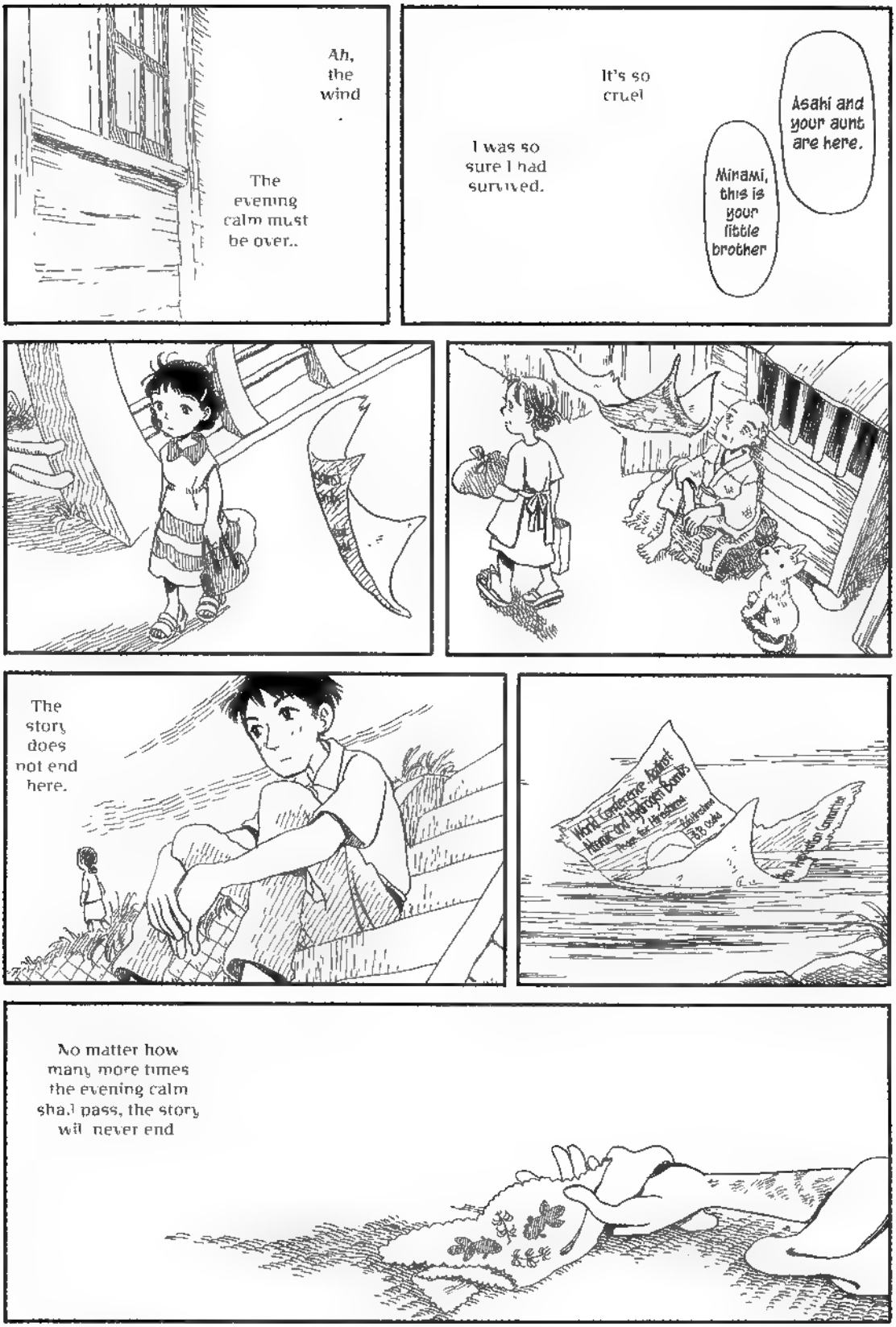
I avoided touching Ms. Furuta.

Minami, your co-workers are here to see you.

Ouch!

(1) An island in the Seto Inland Sea. It is located several miles off the coast of Hiroshima City.

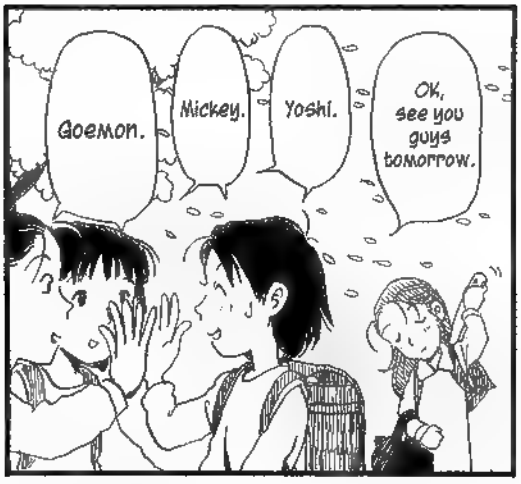

It has been ten years since, but if those who dropped the bomb could see me now, would they still think "Hooray! We killed another one of 'em!"?
Minami ...
My hair may also have fallen out, but I'm too weak to touch my head to be sure
I'll do it tomorrow.. Yes, tomorrow. .
My arms can barely hold the bedpan
Another lukewarm lump works its way up my throat
This time, it feels like it must be part of an organ, not just congealed blood anymore
Are they happy?

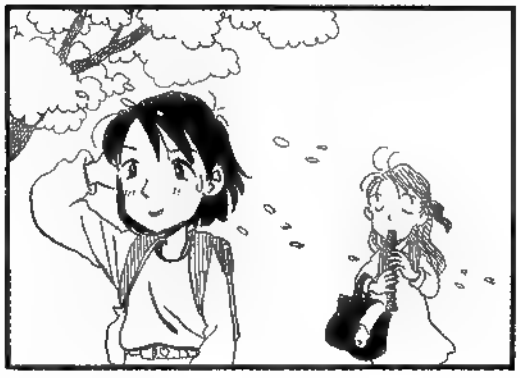

Ah, the wind.
The evening calm must be over..
It's so cruel
I was so sure I had survived.
Asahi and your aunt are here.
Minami, this is your little brother
The story does not end here.
No matter how many more times the evening calm shall pass, the story will never end

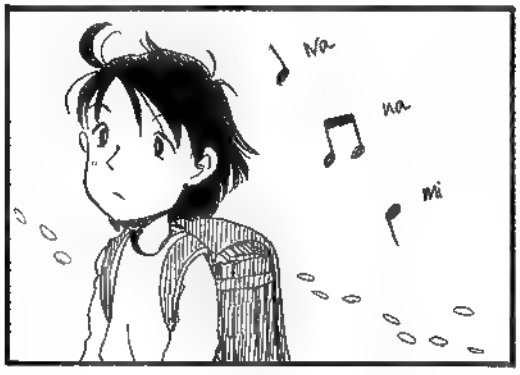
The Town of Evening Calm - End

桜の国(一)

THE COUNTRY OF CHERRY BLOSSOMS PART 1

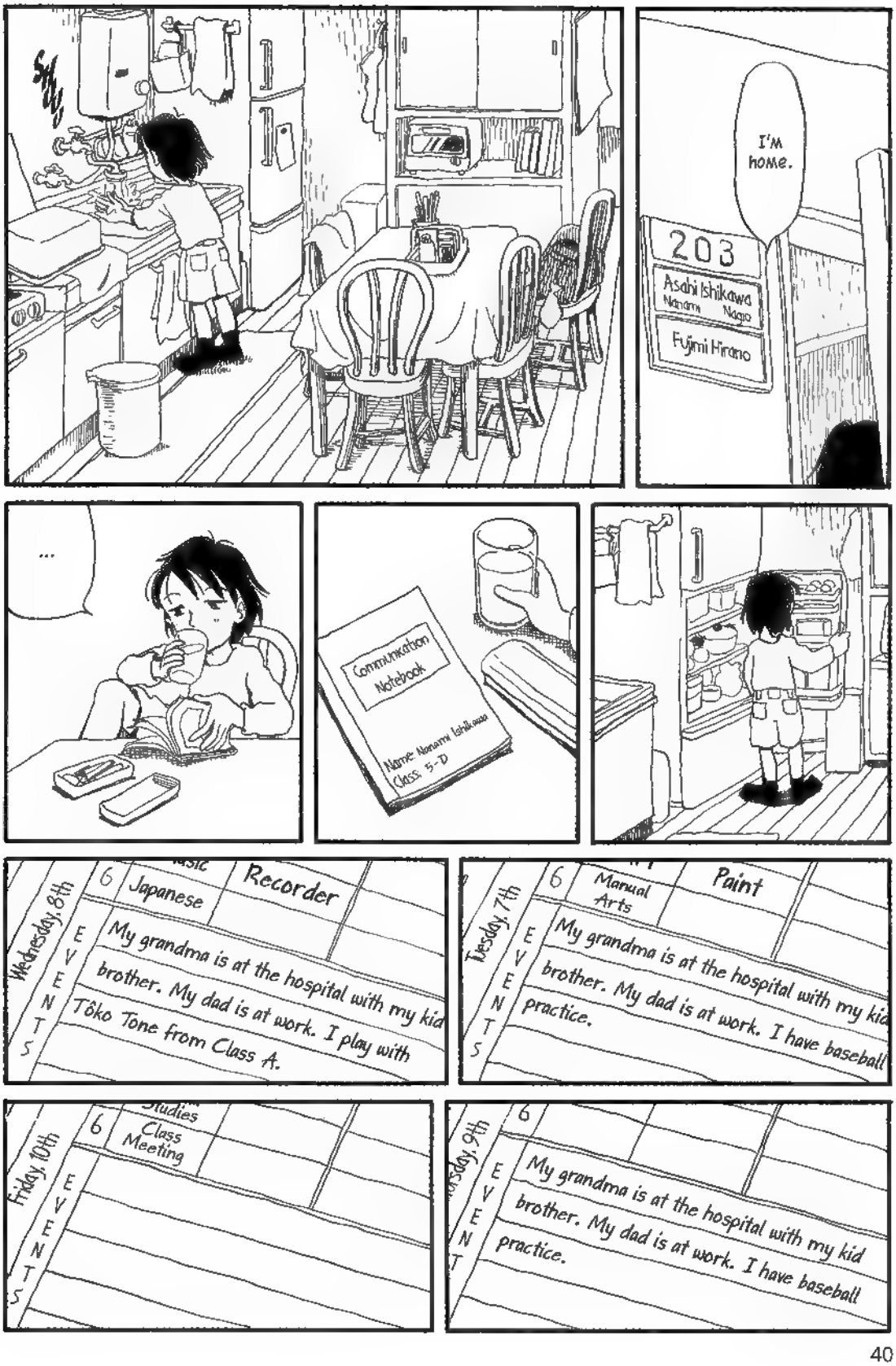


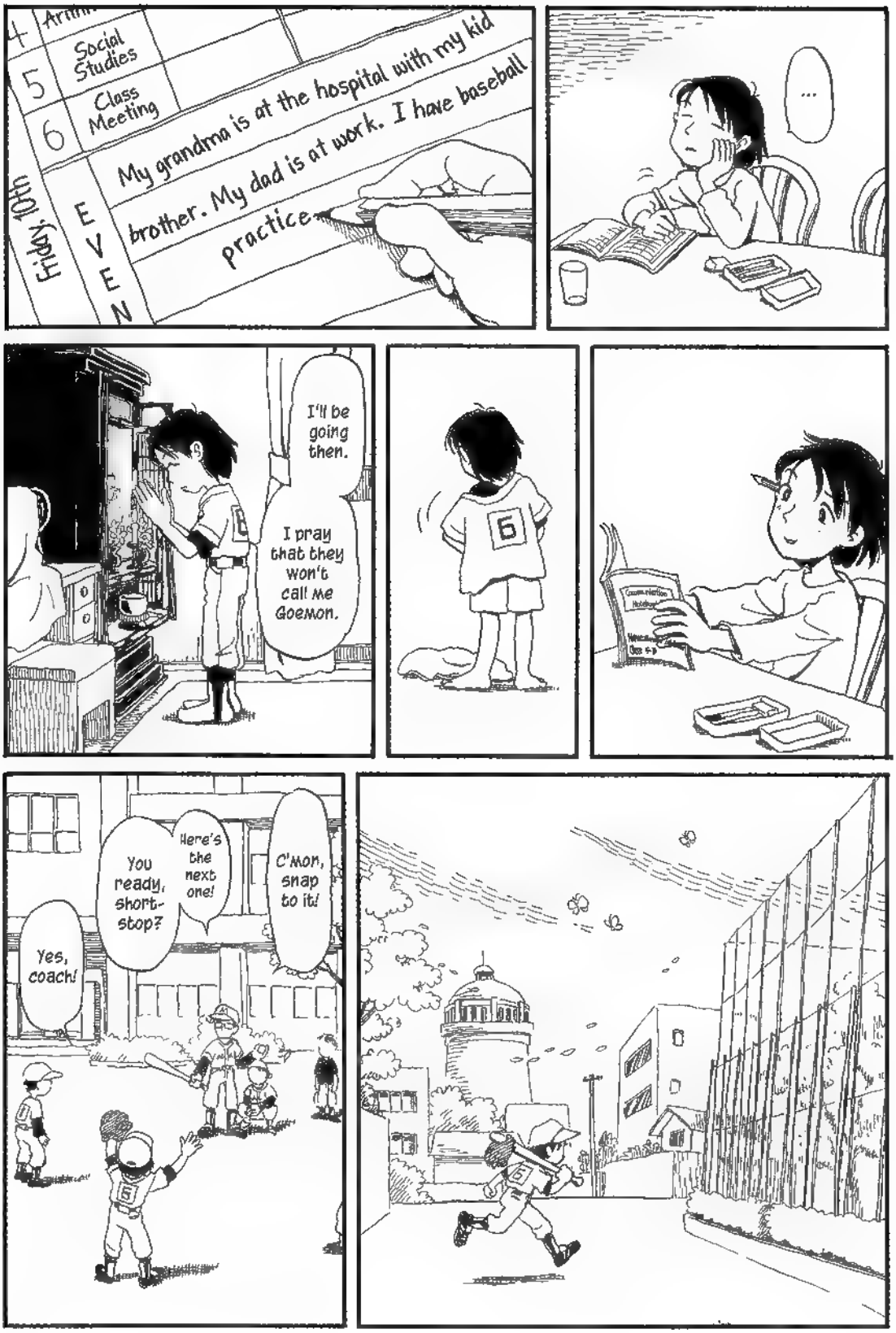


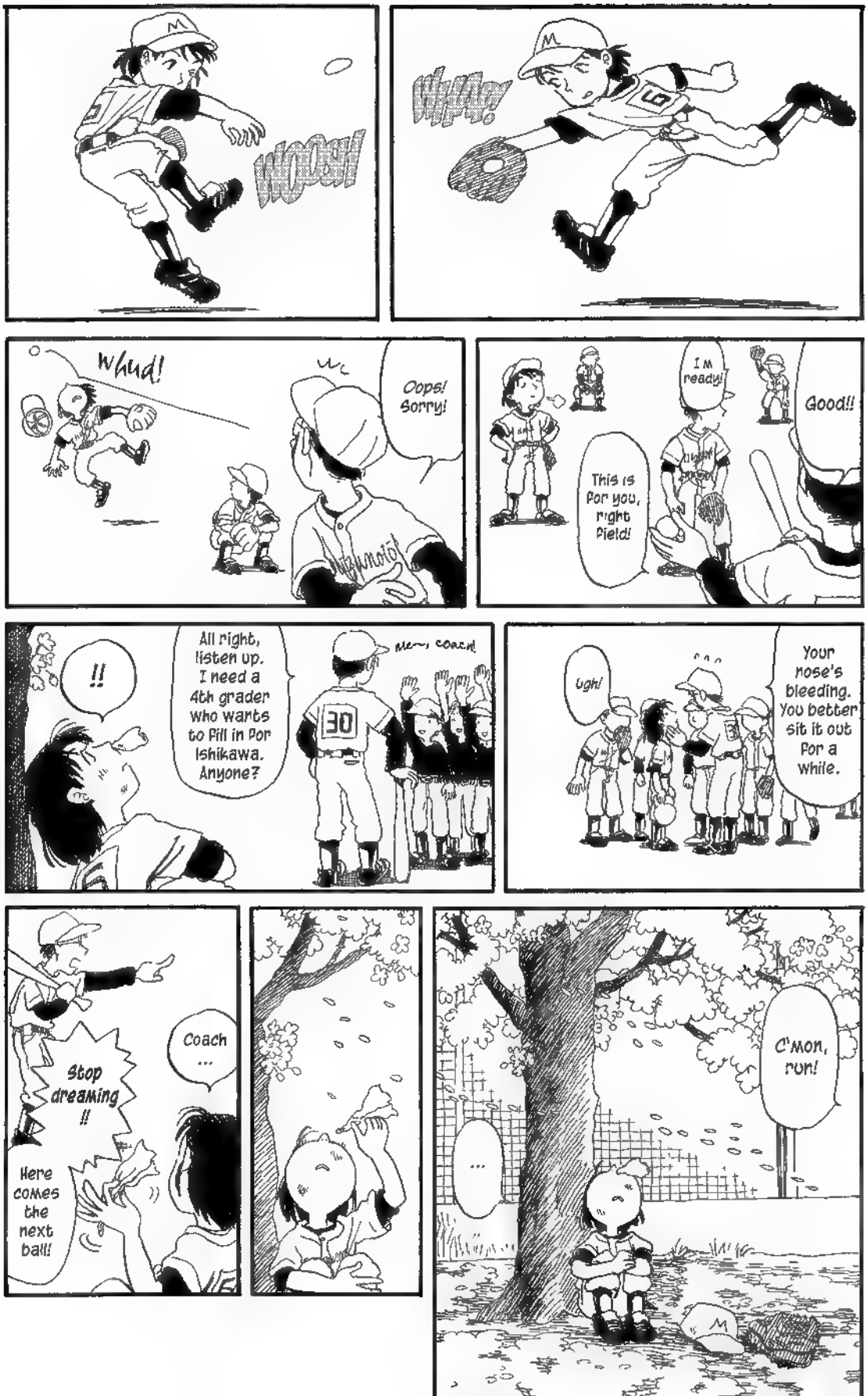


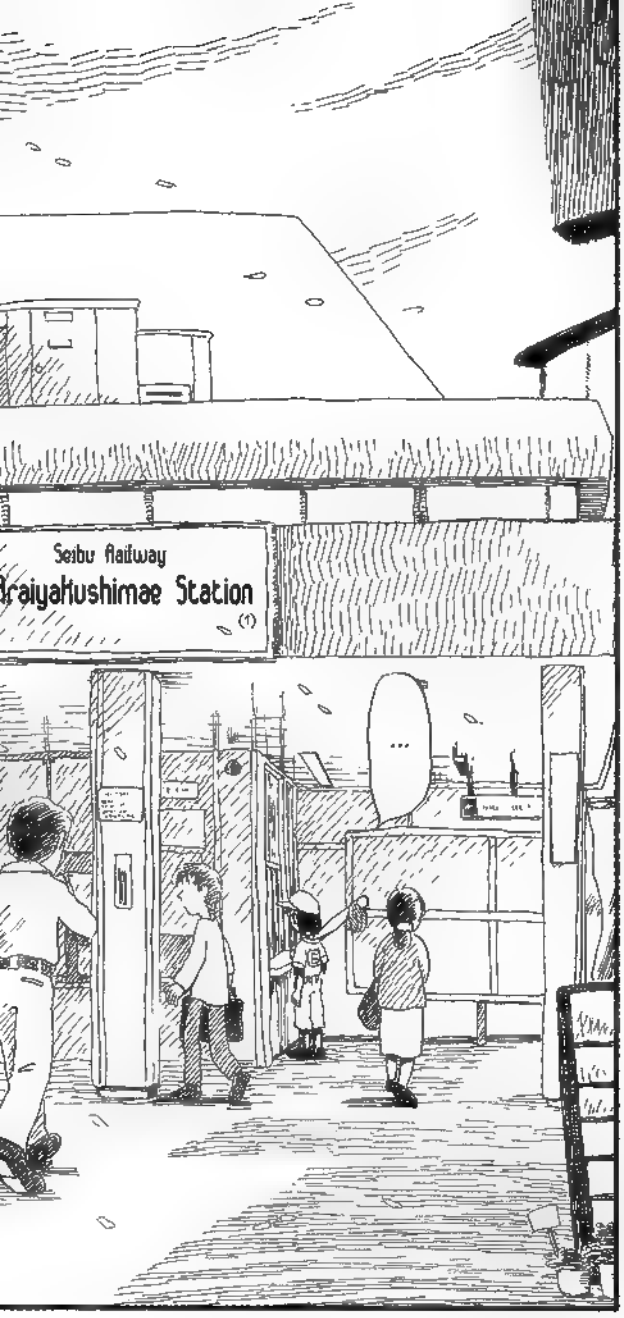
(1) Goemon Ishikawa (石川五右衛門) (1558-1594) was a famous Japanese thief who is considered a folk hero by many people. He is also mentioned in *Lupin III* as an ancestor of one of Lupin's partners, Goemon Ishikawa XIII.

That's not certain yet!
So your nickname will be Goemon in the new class?
By the way, in Class A we had to write an essay about "My Future Dream" for homework.
Erm, I mean Goemon.
Huh? But you have to promise me not to doodle all over them again.
This way, you can lend me your textbooks when I forget mine.
You know, being in different classes isn't half bad!
HMM, I guess that means Class D will get it, too.
...
I'm home.
Hello, Toko.

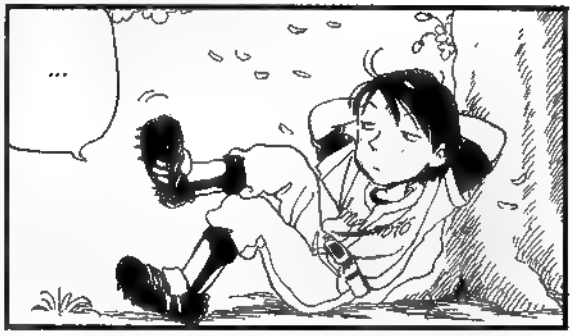

I'm home.
203
Asahi Ishikawa
Nanami Nagao
Fujimi Hirano
...
Communication Notebook
Name: Nanami Ishikawa
Class 5-D
Wednesday, 8th
6
Japanese
Recorder
EVENTS
My grandma is at the hospital with my kid brother. My dad is at work. I play with Tôko Tone from Class A.
Tuesday, 7th
6
Manual Arts
Paint
EVENTS
My grandma is at the hospital with my kid brother. My dad is at work. I have baseball practice.
Friday, 10th
6
Class Meeting
EVENTS
Thursday, 9th
6
EVENT
My grandma is at the hospital with my kid brother. My dad is at work. I have baseball practice.

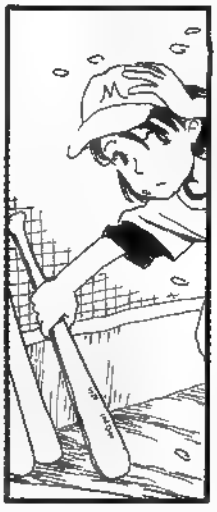

4 Arithm...
5 Social Studies
6 Class Meeting
Friday, 10th
EVEN
My grandma is at the hospital with my kid brother. My dad is at work. I have baseball practice.
...
I'll be going then.
I pray that they won't call me Goemon.
6
Communication Notebook
You ready, short-stop?
Here's the next one!
C'mon, snap to it!
Yes, coach!

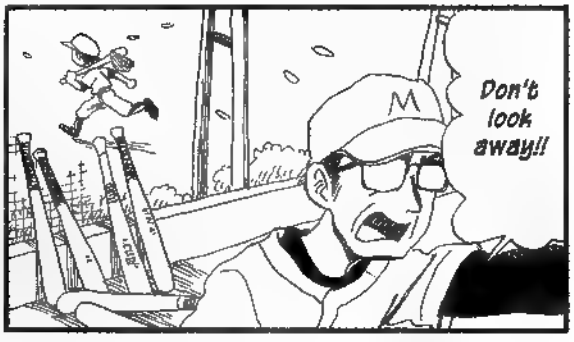

WOOSH!
Whip!
Whud!
Oops! Sorry!
I'm ready!
Good!!
This is for you, right Field!
!!
All right, listen up. I need a 4th grader who wants to fill in for Ishikawa. Anyone?
Me~, coach!
30
Ugh!
Your nose's bleeding. You better sit it out for a while.
Coach ...
Stop dreaming !!
Here comes the next ball!
...
C'mon, run!

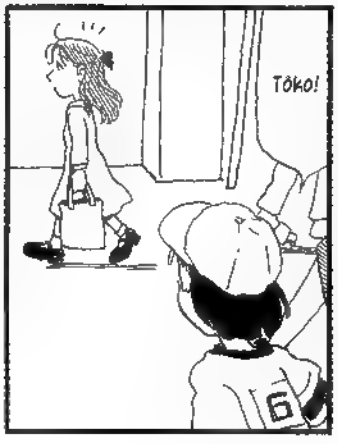


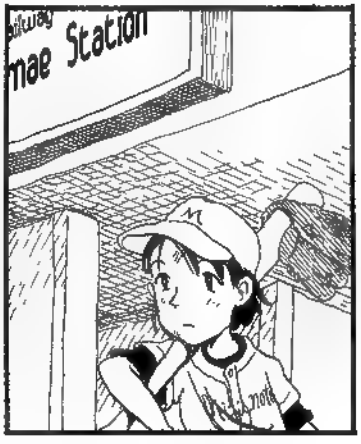
(1) A station on the Seibu Shinjuku Line in Tokyo. It is located west of the Shinjuku area in Nakano ward.







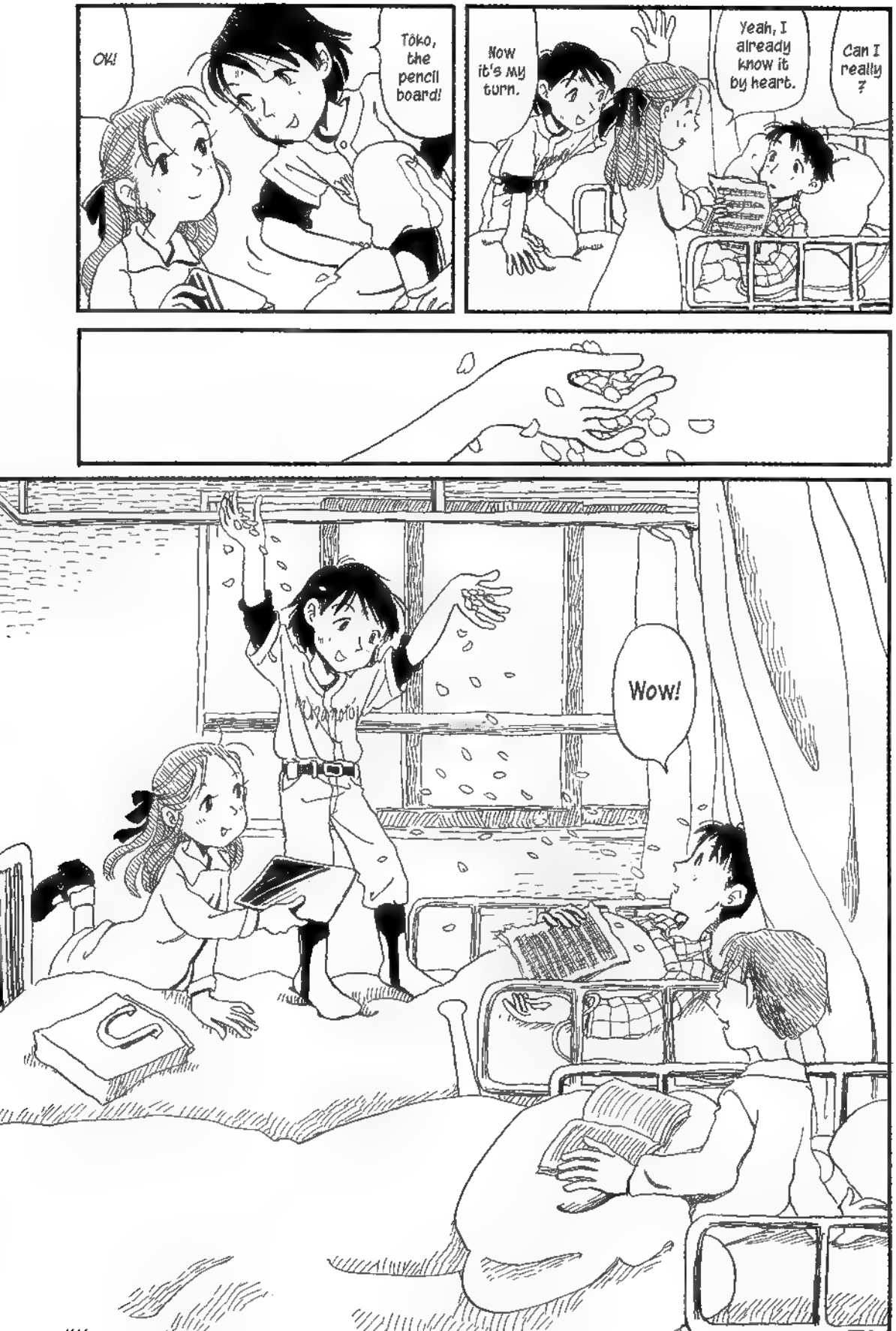




You wanna come along?
What?!
...
...
Farewell, My friend.
...
I want to go on a trip.
Sure. But what do you need it for?
Nanami, look! Over there!
Really?
That's the junior high school my mom went to when she was young.
When I become a 6th grader, I'll also take that school's entrance exam.
Is that the school's uniform?
Yeah.
Lucky you! I think you'll look great in it.

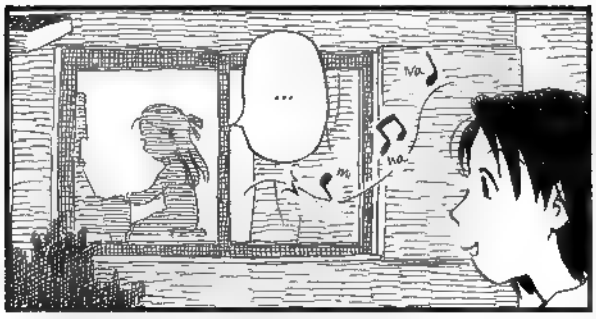
MORGUE
...
You sure this is the right way?
Hey ...
Sobu Line
That's a big burden all right.
But it's not guaranteed that I'll pass the exam. My mom will probably be very disappointed if I fail it...
Just my grandma is scary enough, thank you very much.
Me, I'm glad that I don't have a mother.
...
I find it very admirable of you two to come visit a patient.
Oh, then you should go to the reception at the front entrance. It's around that corner.
Excuse us, we're visitors and...
202
SHAKAWA
NAGAO
Quiet now...
Did you hear how she called me "little boy"?
You think?
What a charming nurse she was!

Oh, Nanami!
Nagio ...
Oh, hello.
Cool beans! Look, our neighbor Töko also came to see you.
I don't know. She told me she'd go home after her test is done.
Where's Grandma?
...
Here, you can have these.
It's my favorite composition.
CZERNY
R I P
Hello ...
CZERNY


OK!
Toko, the pencil board!
Now it's my turn.
Yeah, I already know it by heart.
Can I really ?
Wow!

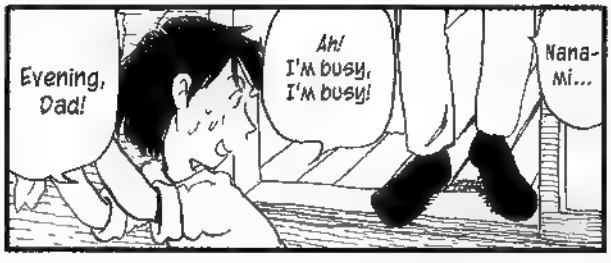
Now, let's give some to your friend, too.
Since you're unable to visit school, I've brought you cherry petals from there.
WOW—!!
Nanami ...
Sis!
YAY—!!
RIP
RIP
Grandma...
BONK

What about you, Nanami? Everything all right?
Huh?
Have you thought for one moment about your brother? If his asthma gets worse, then what?!
Good grief! Didn't I forbid you to come to the hospital?
Yeah ...
You had a nosebleed, right?
Uh ... Grandmother, I suddenly feel dizzy.
Pull
Sorry, that was a lie.
Grandma?
...
She took me in...
I was the one who felt dizzy!
I knew that much!


...
Iya
na
TO
KO

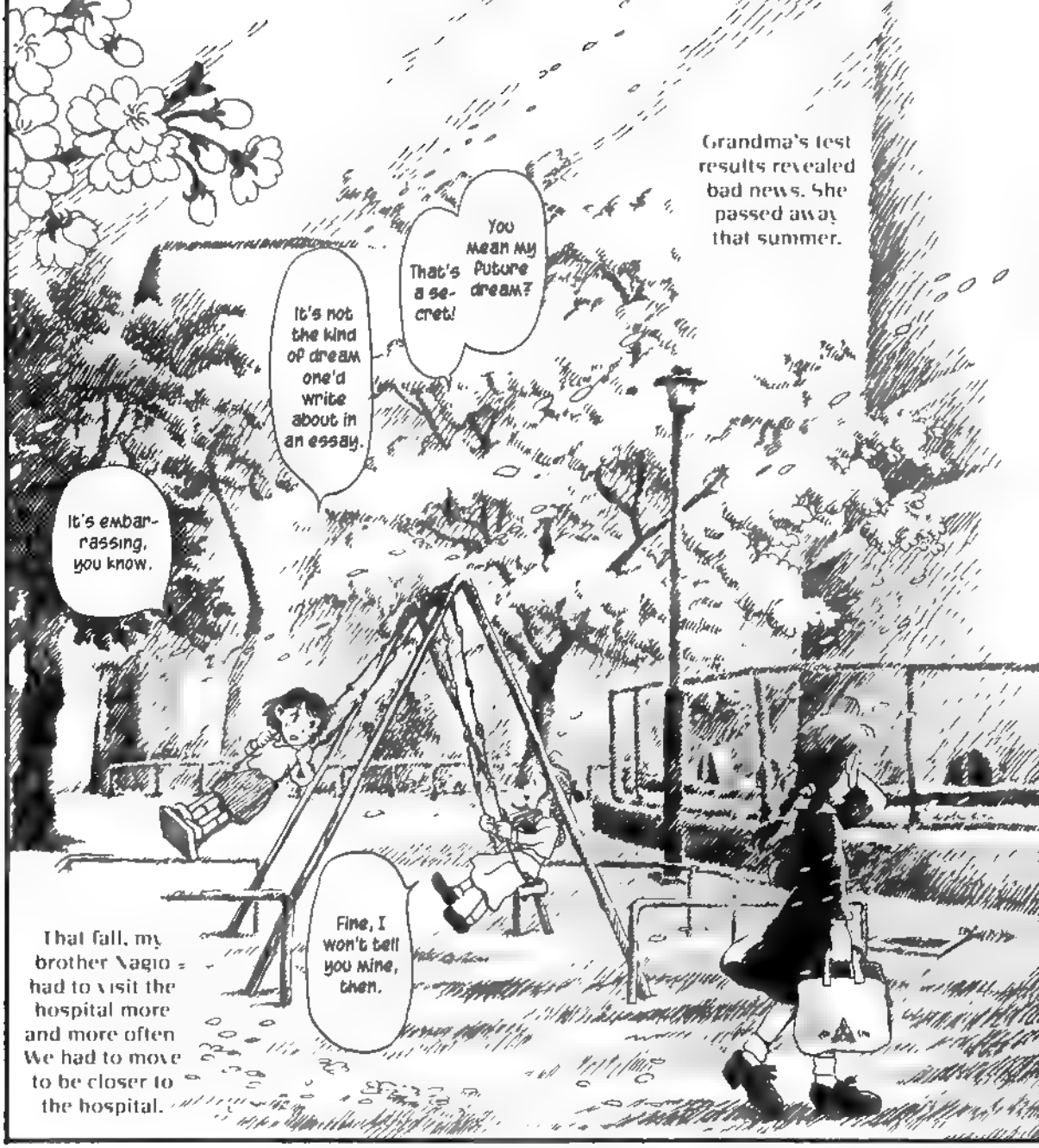
Fujita Hiroaki

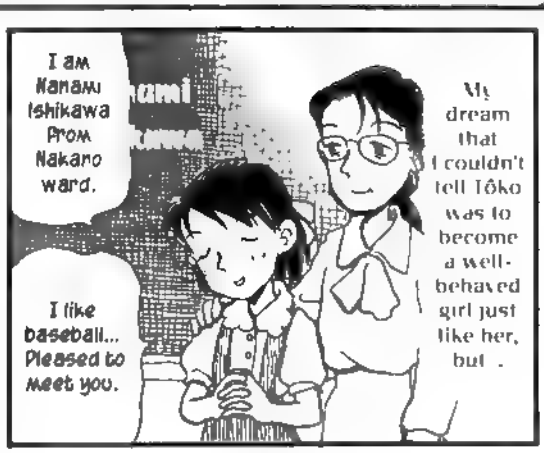
...
...


Evening, Dad!
Ah! I'm busy, I'm busy!
Nana-mi...

Dad ...?
...

I'm sorry, Tôko. You must've got an earful because of me.
Maybe it's a new tactic of his...
I thought he'd go ballistic on me, but he didn't say boo.
Oh ...
No, that's not it. I only look like this...
Leave that for later. The baseball match's about to start.
Huh ?
Oh!
Oh yeah!
"Goemon" or "Goe," what's the difference ?!
Good for you. You didn't become "Goemon."
What ?!
As punishment for your truancy, the coach ordered that you run ten rounds around the schoolyard.
You, Goe!
You mean the one about your future dream?
Yeah.
because I was up until midnight rewriting that essay.
So ...
I also missed the chance to learn Tôko's future dream
What are you going to write your essay about, Nanami?
But it was only much later that I found out why: he was too preoccupied with something else that evening.
My dad didn't scold me
Essay: My Future Dream


Grandma's test results revealed bad news. She passed away that summer.
You mean my future dream?
That's a secret!
It's not the kind of dream one'd write about in an essay.
It's embarrassing, you know.
Fine, I won't tell you mine, then.
That fall, my brother Nagio had to visit the hospital more and more often We had to move to be closer to the hospital.

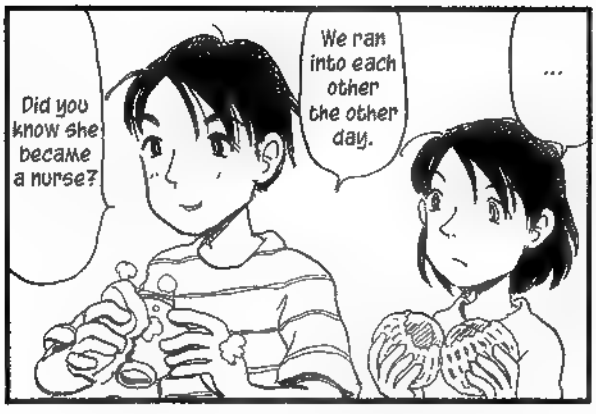

I am Kanami Ishikawa from Nakano ward.
I like baseball... Pleased to meet you.
My dream that I couldn't tell Tôko was to become a well-behaved girl just like her, but .

The Country of Cherry Blossoms (Part 1) - End

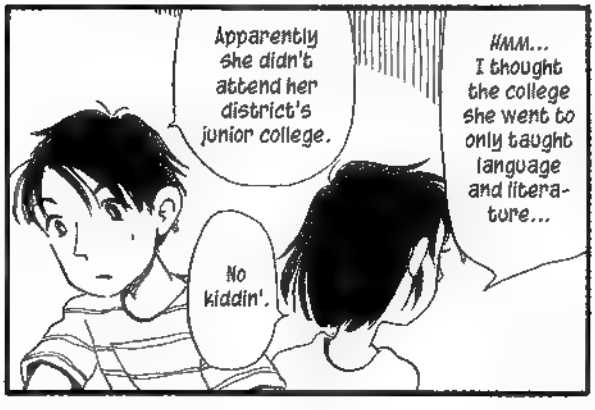
桜の国(一)

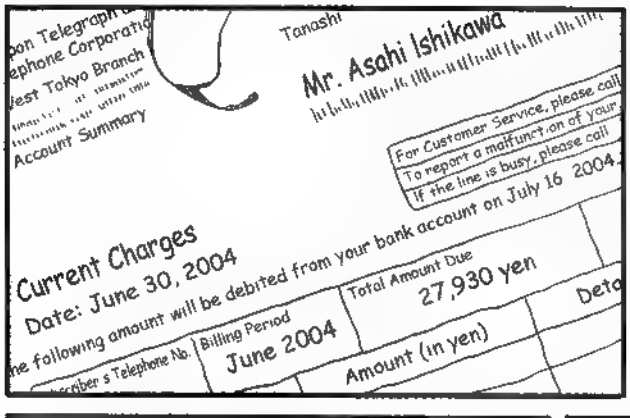
THE COUNTRY OF CHERRY BLOSSOMS PART 1

The Giants, who are two points behind, are now at the bat!
Runner on first in the top of the fifth inning!
He got it!
Pitch four: Inside Straight!
Pitch three- Ball!
That was a slider, wasn't it?
Wha?! I lost again!
Uh-oh! Sounds like bad news!
That was Etô's second safe hit today.
The batter hit a line drive down the left field line for a one-run double!
Oh? Hiroshima are going to replace their pitcher?
Oh...
...
Yes, I know!
Nagio, be sure to wash the dishes' undersides, too!
...if the two leagues merge, the next team that's going to disappear will be the Carp. Don't you think, Dad?
I admit that Etô's a pretty good batter, but...
...

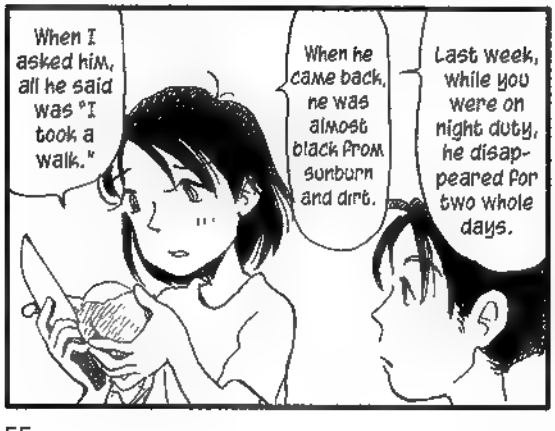

Did you know she became a nurse?
We ran into each other the other day.
...

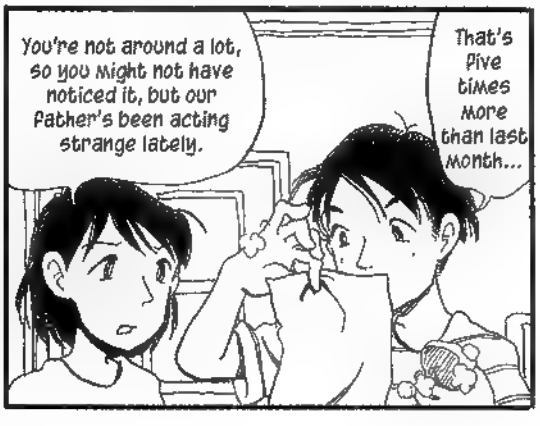
Right, right!
...
Nanami, do you remember your old friend Toko Tone?

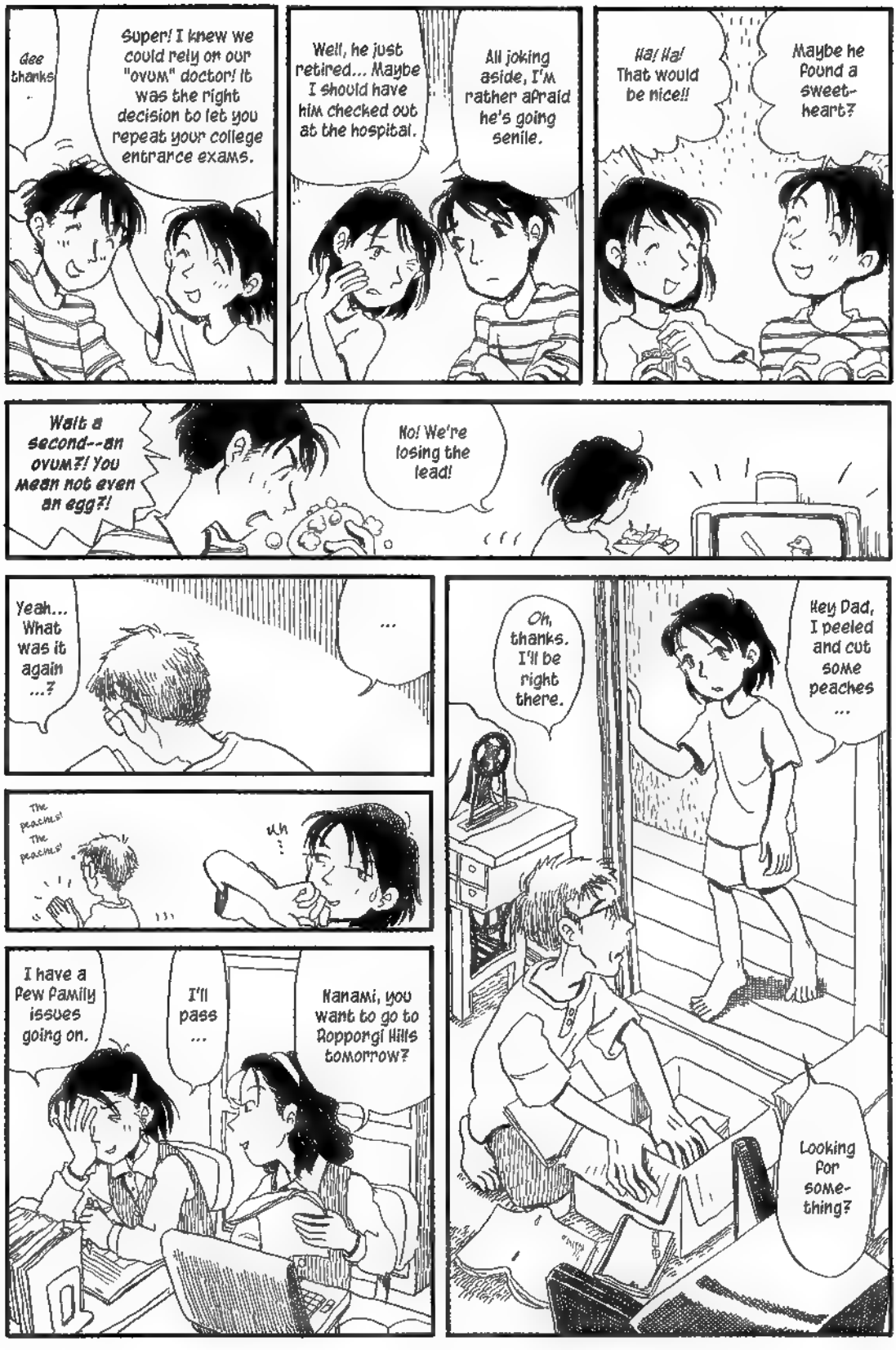

Apparently she didn't attend her district's junior college.
HMM... I thought the college she went to only taught language and literature...
No kiddin'.


Tanashi
Mr. Asahi Ishikawa
For Customer Service, please call
To report a malfunction of your
If the line is busy, please call
Account Summary
Current Charges
Date: June 30, 2004
Billing Period
June 2004
Total Amount Due
27,930 yen
Amount (in yen)

Never Mind that. I've got something more important to show you.
Gee, weren't you two like best friends? Why so cold?


When I asked him, all he said was "I took a walk."
When he came back, he was almost black from sunburn and dirt.
Last week, while you were on night duty, he disappeared for two whole days.


You're not around a lot, so you might not have noticed it, but our father's been acting strange lately.
That's five times more than last month...


Gee thanks.
Super! I knew we could rely on our "ovum" doctor! It was the right decision to let you repeat your college entrance exams.
Well, he just retired... Maybe I should have him checked out at the hospital.
All joking aside, I'm rather afraid he's going senile.
Ha! Ha! That would be nice!!
Maybe he found a sweetheart?
Wait a second--an ovum?! You mean not even an egg?!
No! We're losing the lead!
Yeah... What was it again ...?
...
Oh, thanks. I'll be right there.
Hey Dad, I peeled and cut some peaches ...
Looking for something?
The peaches! The peaches!
Uh ...
I have a few family issues going on.
I'll pass ...
Nanami, you want to go to Roppongi Hills tomorrow?

...
Did you eat them today, Dad?
I was sure we had one or two peaches left.
Weird ...
No problem. A walk will do me good.
No, it's fine. You don't have to bother, Dad.
Huh ?!
If you want I can go buy you some more.
Sorry about that.
Oh, that could be...
SLAM
Sure... See you later.
I'm gonna go take a look!
Nagio, Dad's out for a "walk" again.
...

...
30, Ishikawa
What's with him? He seems so much gloomier tonight than usual.
EST TOKYO GENERAL HOSPITAL
Emergency and work-related accident cases only!
Three minutes walk from the station's north exit (West Tokyo)
Otolaryngology
Ophthalmology
Internal Medicine
Pediatrics
Obstetrics and Gynecology
TANASHI STATION
SOUTH EXIT
Whoa! Shoosh! Shoosh!
Nanami?!
Now this is a strange walk...

But isn't that your father?
Um, a little problem in the family... I'm tailing someone...
I knew it was you, Nanami! What are you doing?
Well, I'll be! Tôko?!
Thanks ...
I bought us tickets for 220 yen.
...
Wait a minute!
Yeah... Now I got to go...
No... It's just a coincidence.
Are you often in the area, Tôko?
What a strange place for a reunion ...
... ...
O-OK!
We'd better hurry up or the train will leave without us.

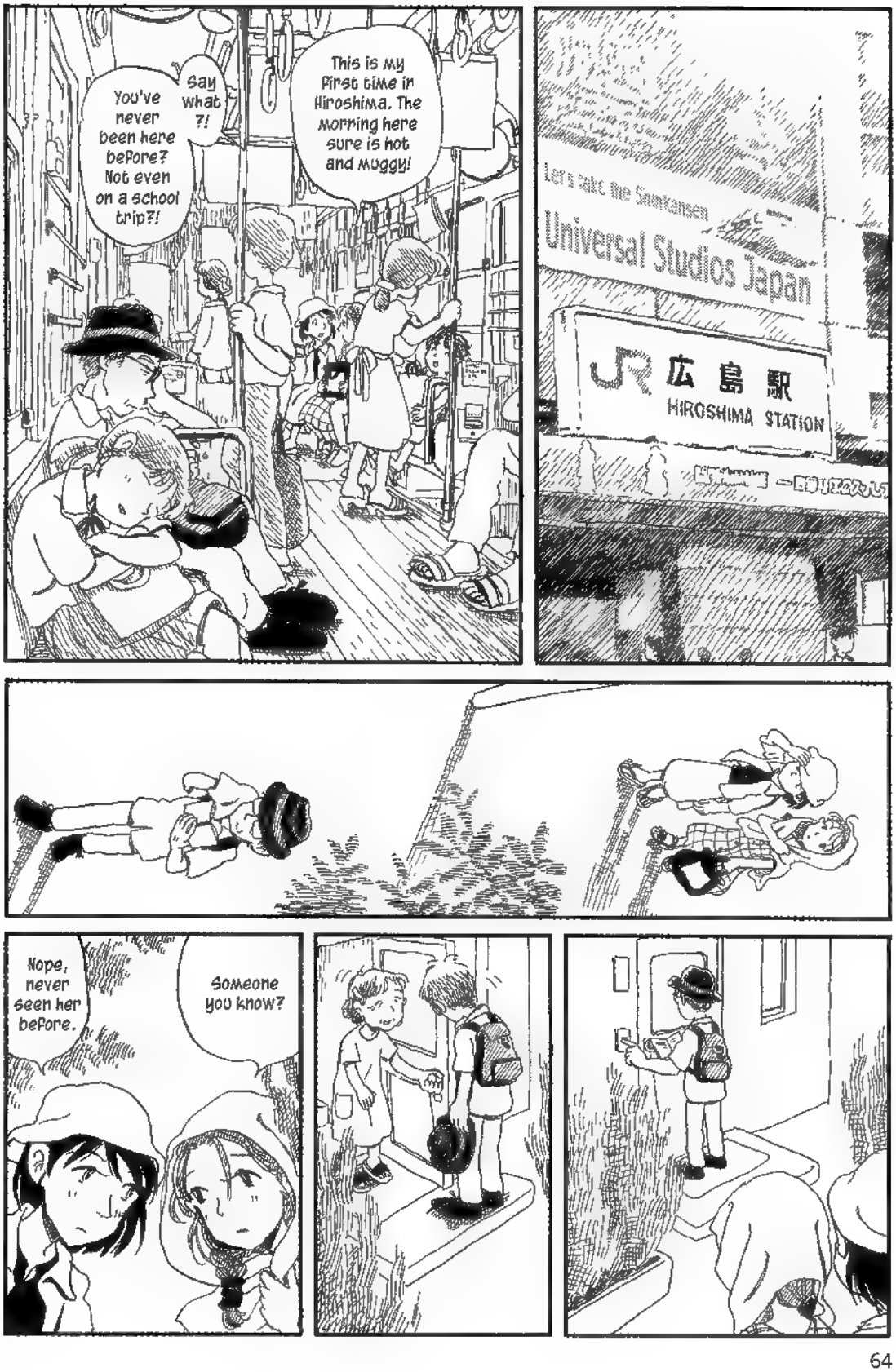
...
Do you mind if I stay with you for a bit longer?
Say, Narami ...
Thanks for everything.
Oh, that's your stop, isn't it?
Next stop: Arai-yakushi-mae.
JR
東京駅
Tōkyo Station
Kitaguchi, Central Exit
Not really, no, but...
DESTINATION:
Hiroshima Station
...
Night Bus
Bus No.
I think we should go back. I don't have any money on me, and...
...
Expressway Bus Stop
2
Hiroshima Station

We're lucky. There were still seats left.
Here, your ticket.
You don't have to work tomorrow, right, Nanami?
Expressway Bus – Ticket Office
Hey, listen ...
Huh?!
I'll lend you money.
Good evening.
...
was that a good idea?
Thanks ...
I've got another one.
No, you can keep it on.
Phew, that was close!

You mean Nagio?
How is it? I hope our intern isn't giving you too much trouble.
Oh, that's right! I heard you became a nurse.
I think he's well-liked by all the staff. They fondly call him Goemon.
It's OK. They probably think I'm on night duty, anyway.
Shouldn't you call home?
Tōko ...
Actually, I think he looks a lot like you, Nanami!
Are you kidding?!
He! He!
Him, too, huh? Well, with a mug like his, I guess I shouldn't be surprised...
Let's go to sleep before he notices us.
You're right.
Yeah ...
It's been quite some time, Nanami.
That's why I had no problem recognizing your face even after 17 years.

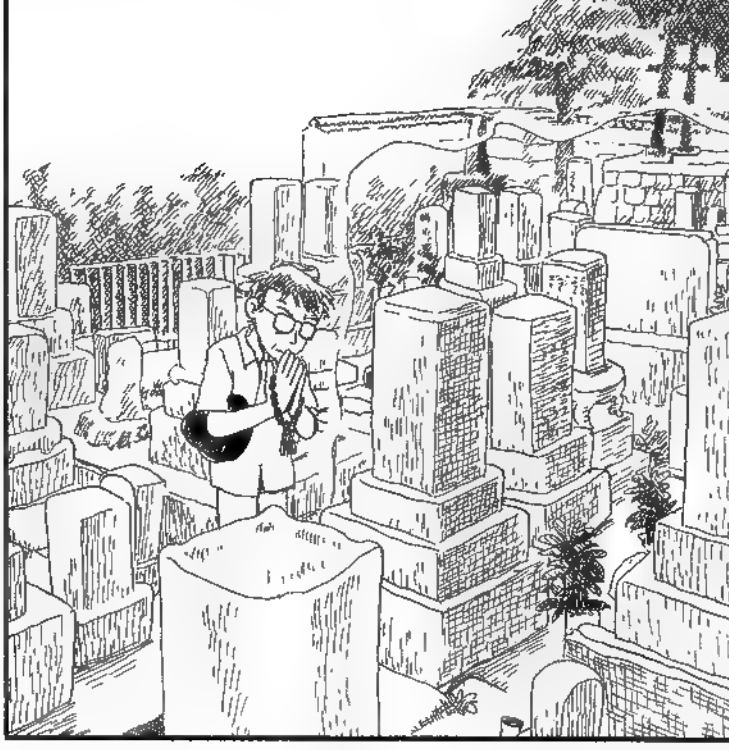
I didn't want to see her.

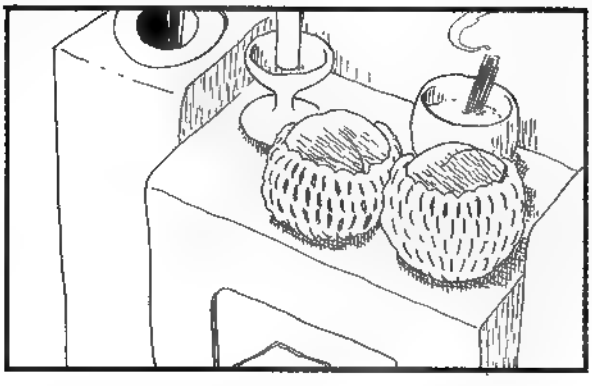
Grandma, are you in pain?
Her perfume reminds me of that avenue of cherry trees on a sunny day..
Oh, Midori's friend, right?
W-Who might you be..?
Have you taken your medicine?
I'm sorry. Midori's not home yet.
It's me, Nanami.
Her, with her beautiful hair and her lovely clothes..
Grandma ...
How did you manage to survive?
Where were you, my girl?
So tell me .

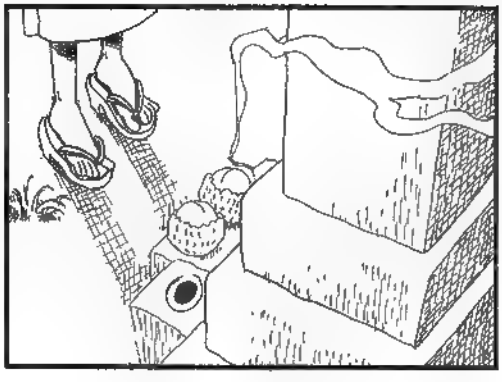

This is my first time in Hiroshima. The morning here sure is hot and muggy!
Say what?!
You've never been here before? Not even on a school trip?!
Let's take the Shinkansen
Universal Studios Japan
JR 広島駅
HIROSHIMA STATION
Someone you know?
Nope, never seen her before.

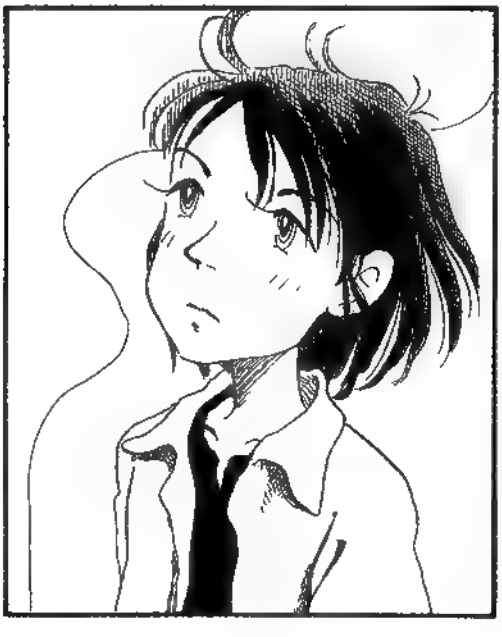
...
...
...
...
Just give me a call at that number when things have settled down a bit, OK?
T-that's a great idea!
That streetcar will take you there, right?
You know what? Now that I'm here, I might as well go visit the Peace Park.
BUS
What a pain...

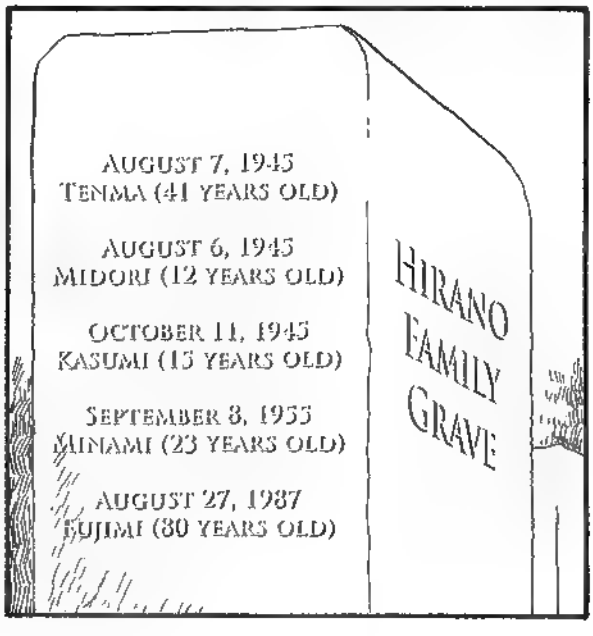
...

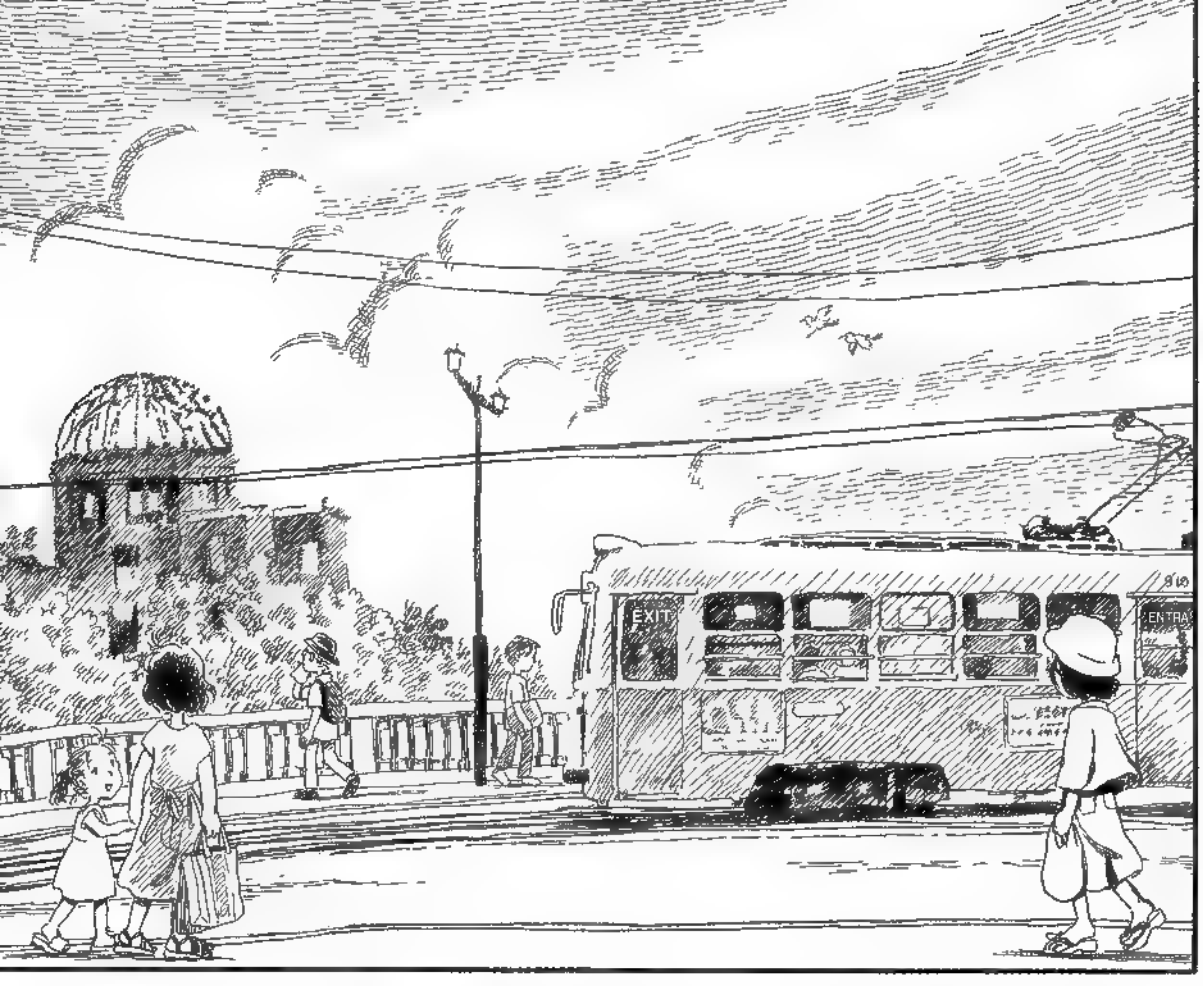


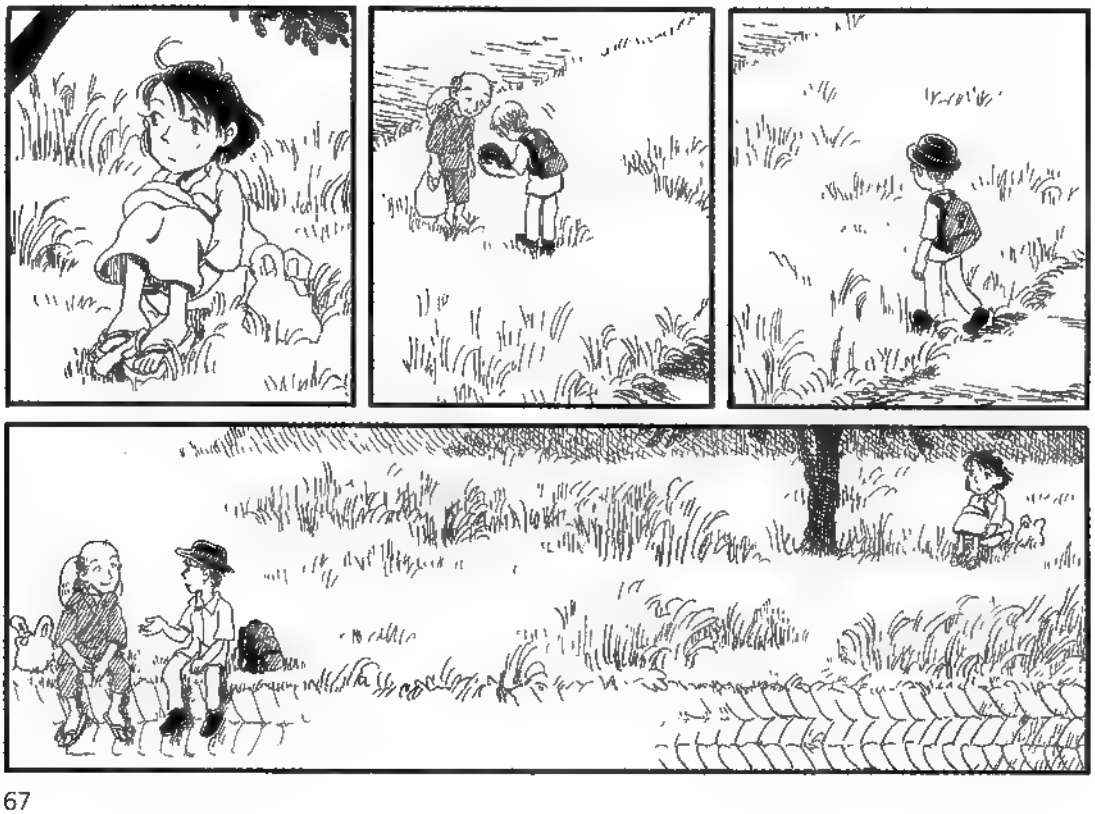




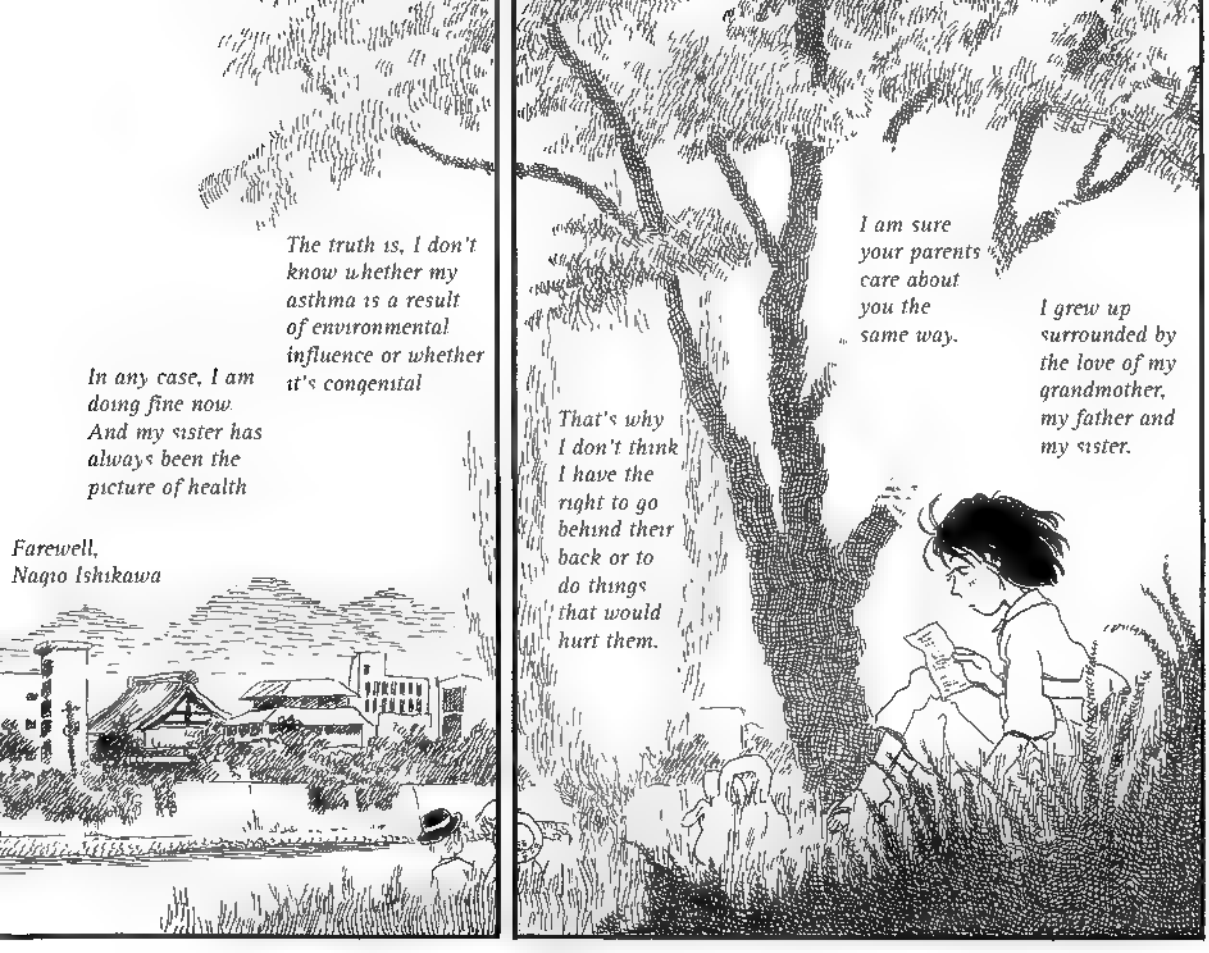


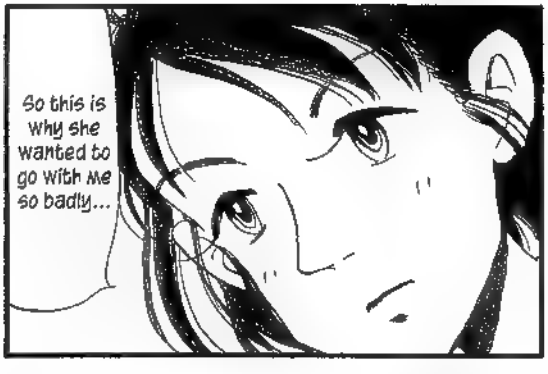

AUGUST 7, 1945
TENMA (41 YEARS OLD)
AUGUST 6, 1945
MIDORI (12 YEARS OLD)
OCTOBER 11, 1945
KASUMI (15 YEARS OLD)
SEPTEMBER 8, 1955
MINAMI (23 YEARS OLD)
AUGUST 27, 1987
FUJIMI (80 YEARS OLD)
HIRANO
FAMILY
GRAVE

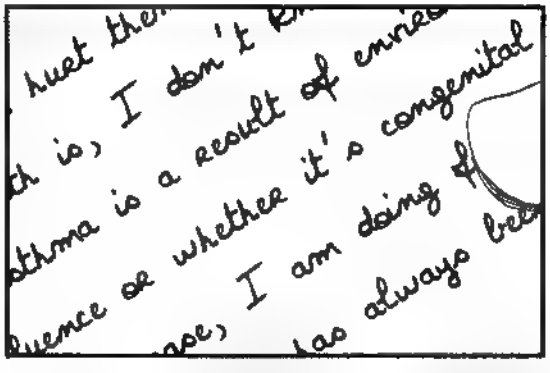

EXIT

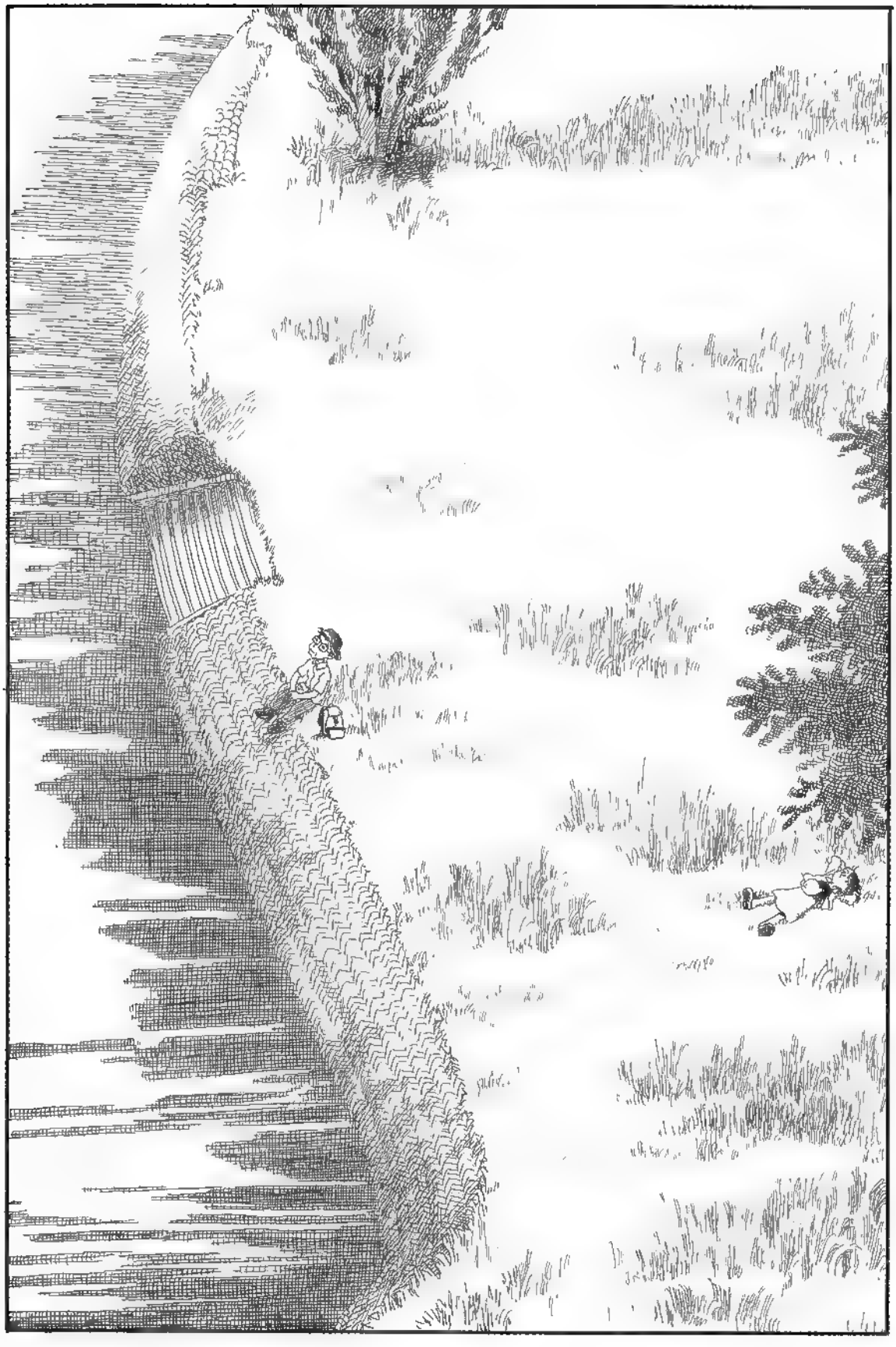


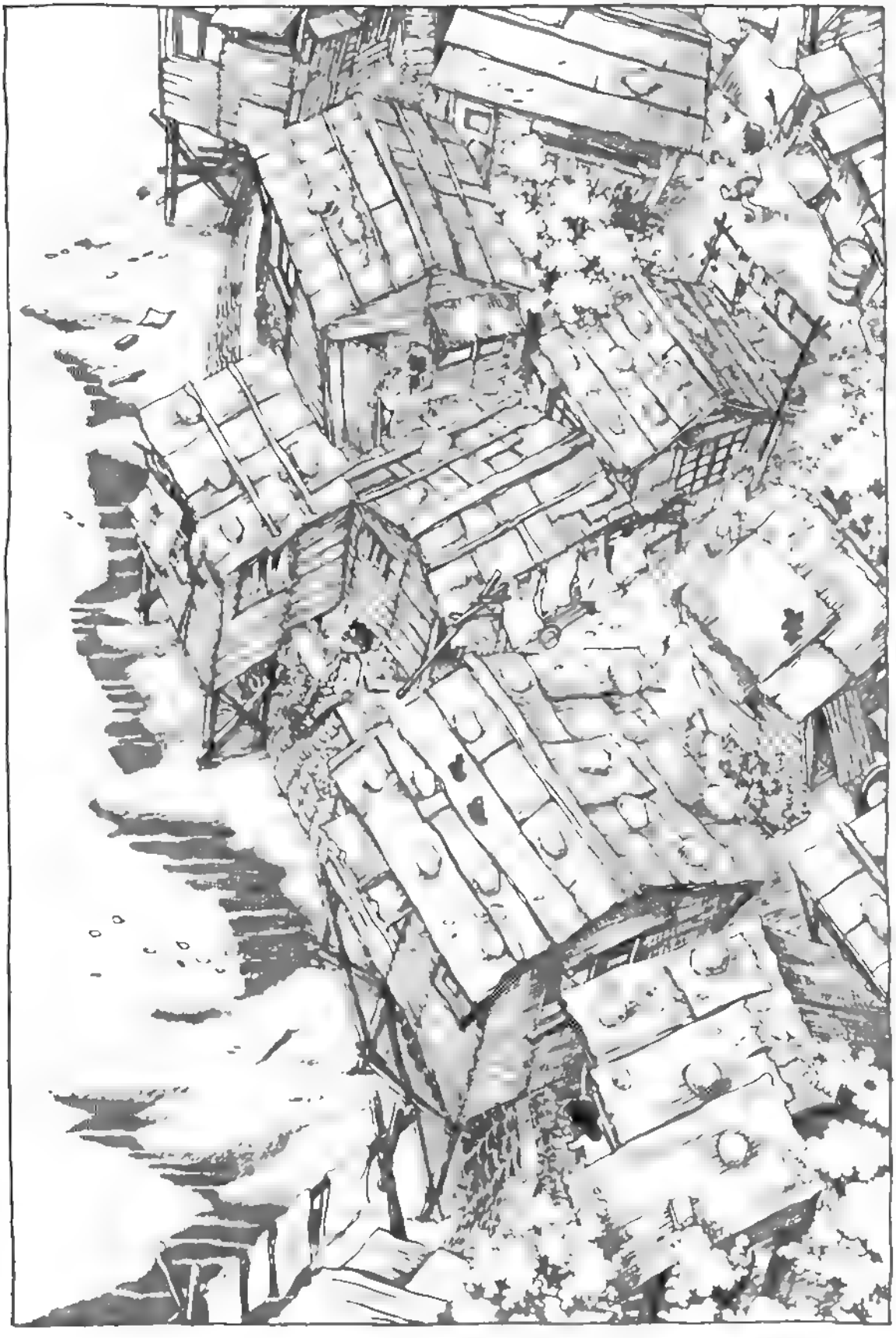
Oh!
?
I should call Tôko ...
Dear Tôko,
I met your parents today. They asked me to stop seeing you.
Ms. Tôko Tone
Nagio Ishikawa


The truth is, I don't know whether my asthma is a result of environmental influence or whether it's congenital
In any case, I am doing fine now. And my sister has always been the picture of health
Farewell,
Nagio Ishikawa
I am sure your parents care about you the same way.
I grew up surrounded by the love of my grandmother, my father and my sister.
That's why I don't think I have the right to go behind their back or to do things that would hurt them.


So this is why she wanted to go with me so badly...

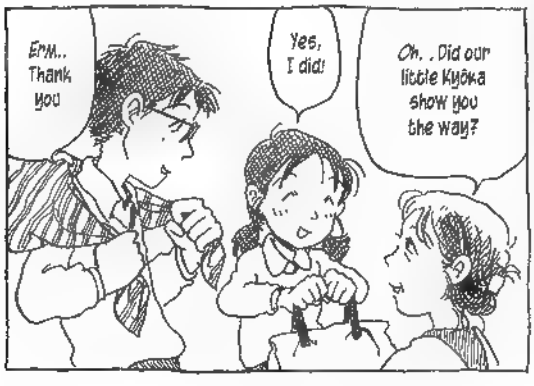






Asahi! You're here already?
Hello, Mama. It's been too long!
Ma'am!

Excuse me, could you tell me where to find Fujimi Hirano's house?
We Are Totally Opposed to Fascism
Jason & Soba Woodles


Erm.. Thank you
Yes, I did!
Oh, . Did our little Kyōka show you the way?

Huh? Oh, t-thanks ...
I bid you welcome.
A-a pleasure, sir. My name is Kyoka Ōta.

I am Asahi Ishikawa. Starting today, I'll be living here. Nice to meet you.
...

The entrance ceremony is the day after tomorrow.
When does college start?

It was very polite.
No, not at all.
Was that not good?

(1) A confection made of jellied plum (*ume*) and typically wrapped in bamboo leaf.

Kyoka, take some *nashiume*' with you.
Oh dear, thank you kindly.
Here, ma'am!
Yes, ma'am!
Don't eat the wrapping!
...
It's a specialty from Mito. Share them with Motoharu.
A girl from the neighborhood?
Yes, she comes to help me out from time to time.
Thank you very much!
I wonder if he has a baseball glove..?
She has a big brother?
She now lives all alone with her big brother who's just finished Middle school I'M worried about them.
Poor little one... Not enough that she's a bit slow in the head, she recently lost her father, too.

Ha! Ha! Ha!
Asahi, if you teach my brother how to play baseball, he might make it into the Carp!
Wow, you sure got a knack for this, Kyoka.
The cloth came out nicely too, didn't it?
You're doing well!
Yes, that's the way.
Fine then I'm going out for a bit.
...
When I think of your clumsy sister who couldn't be trusted to do a good job ..
That I have indeed ..
You've found a worthy apprentice, Mama.
You know there used to be a young woman living here with her, right? That was my older sister.
Because she's My Mother. We might have different last names, but she's My birth Mother.
Say, Asahi ...
Why do you call Mrs Hirano "Mama"?
And yet...
You have no accent at all.
You speak like the people on TV.
D-do I?

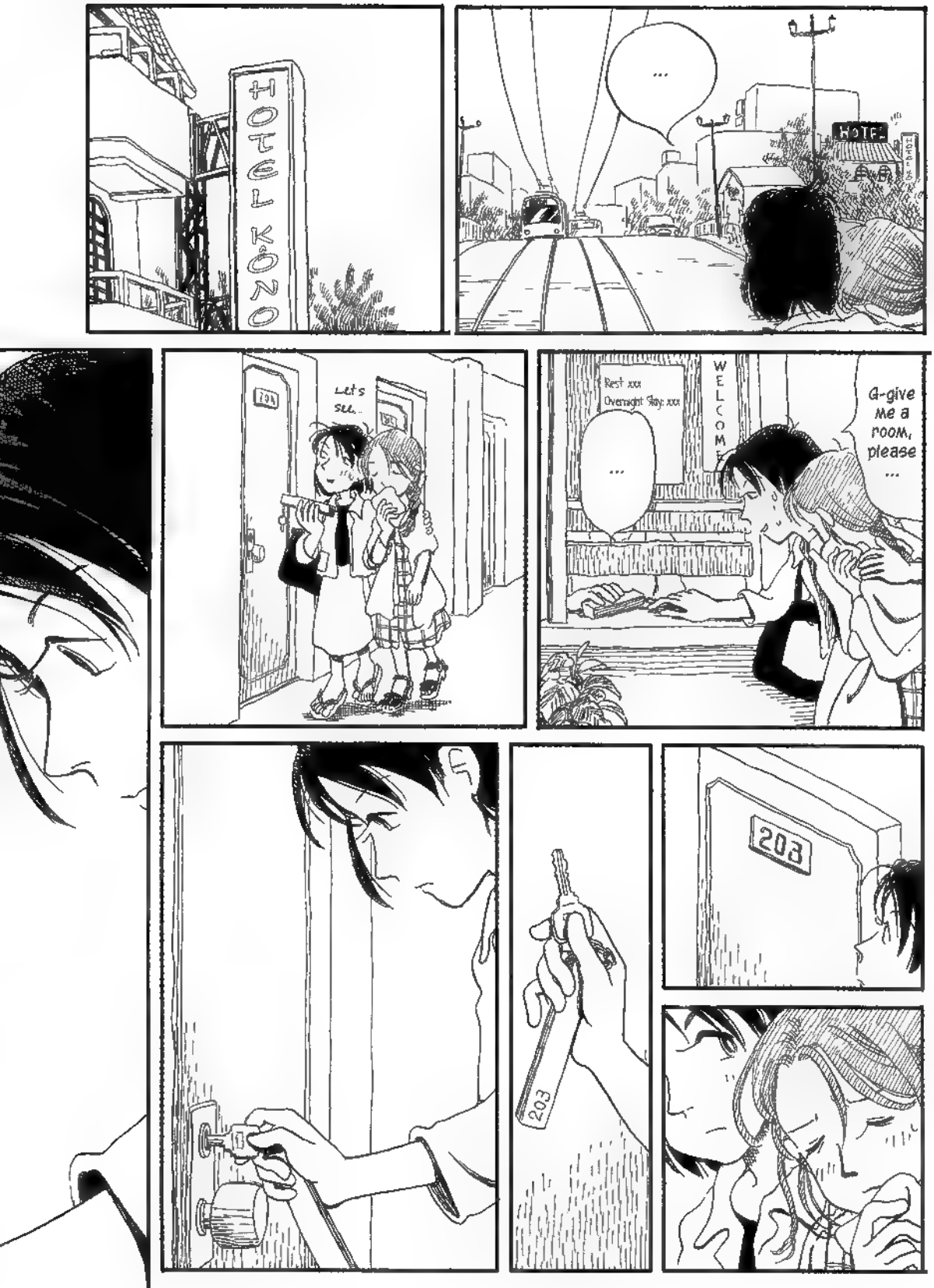
(1) In the Japanese version, everybody in Hiroshima speaks with a strong accent typical of that region.

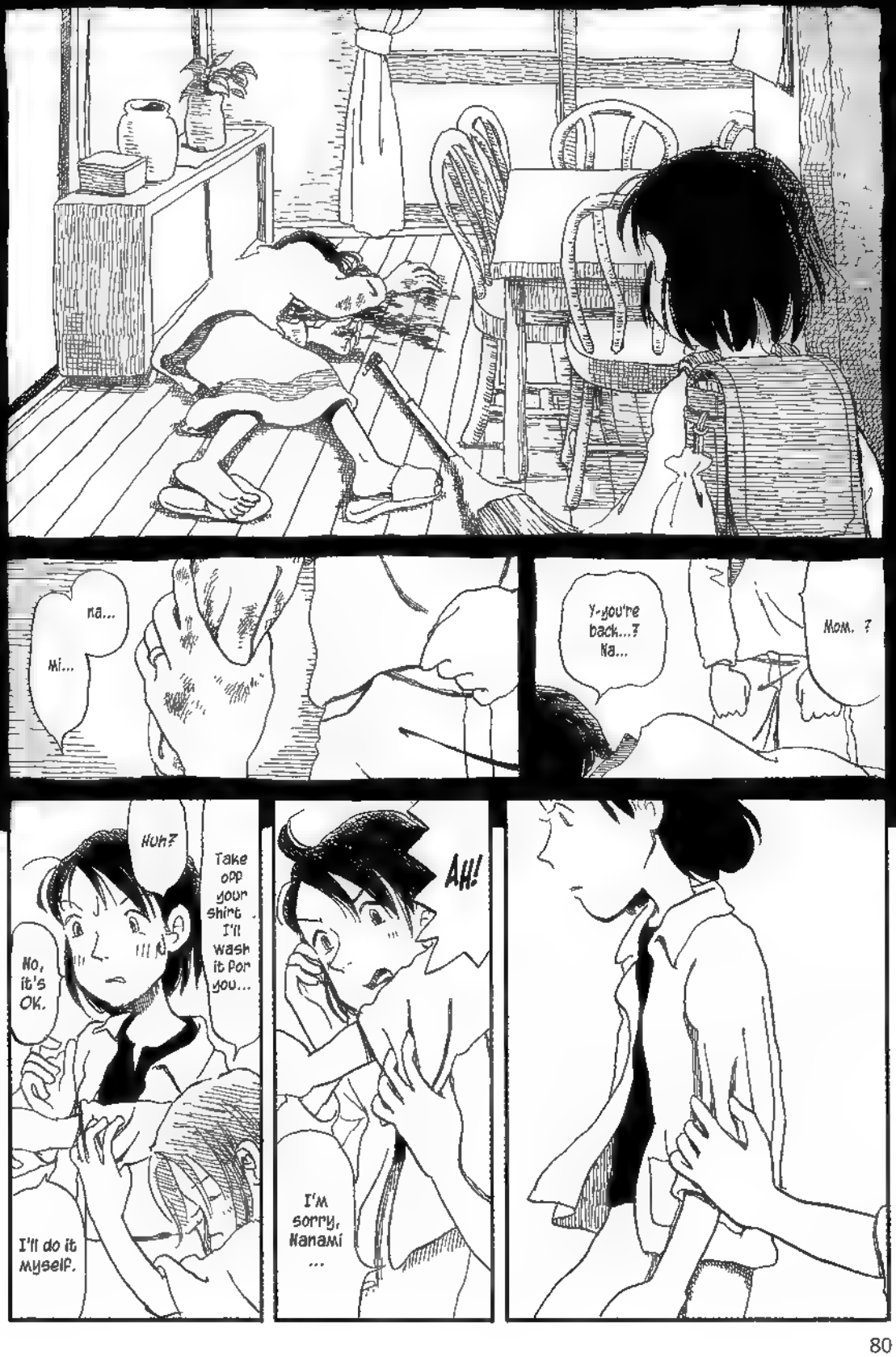
Yes... They made me stay behind today to take an extra lesson in arithmetic. Yesterday it was social studies...
Later than us college students.
Oh?
You're coming home late these days.
We Are Dead Against Evictions
My God! What a horrible bump!
I got whacked so many times with the bamboo stick that I grew a few inches!
That's why I'm dumb.
...
I was infected by the lightning's poison when I was a baby.
It's not normal to automatically blame the A-bomb for everything...
...
Uh-huh.
Your teacher too?
Everyone
Who told you that?

...
I'll tutor you.
Ok, let me have a look at your textbooks.
...
I'll be your teacher!
G-give me your books!.
(1) Asahi is mimicking the Hiroshima accent in these two sentences.
Who could blame her? After they made her hit the books all day long, you asked her to suffer more.
Do you think she's mad at me?
I see...
She did understand what you said, you know.
That was not nice.
The way you say those sentences, one'd think you're talking about some super-expensive sort of Mandarins and apples.
I can't help it...
Kyoka, a bit more serious!
Hanako has three Mandarins and one apple...
Taro bought three apples.
He! He! He! He!
He! He!
...

Tōko!
I'm over here!
You're right!
Just figure out the prices and you'll know whether they are expensive or not!
6th Grade Review
Uh-huh
Uh-huh
Uh-huh
The section between the graph of figure u-6 and the S-axis represents the unbounded domain, but what about this area ?
Are you sleeping Kyōka?
Aaaa
It's like I'm in Tokyo

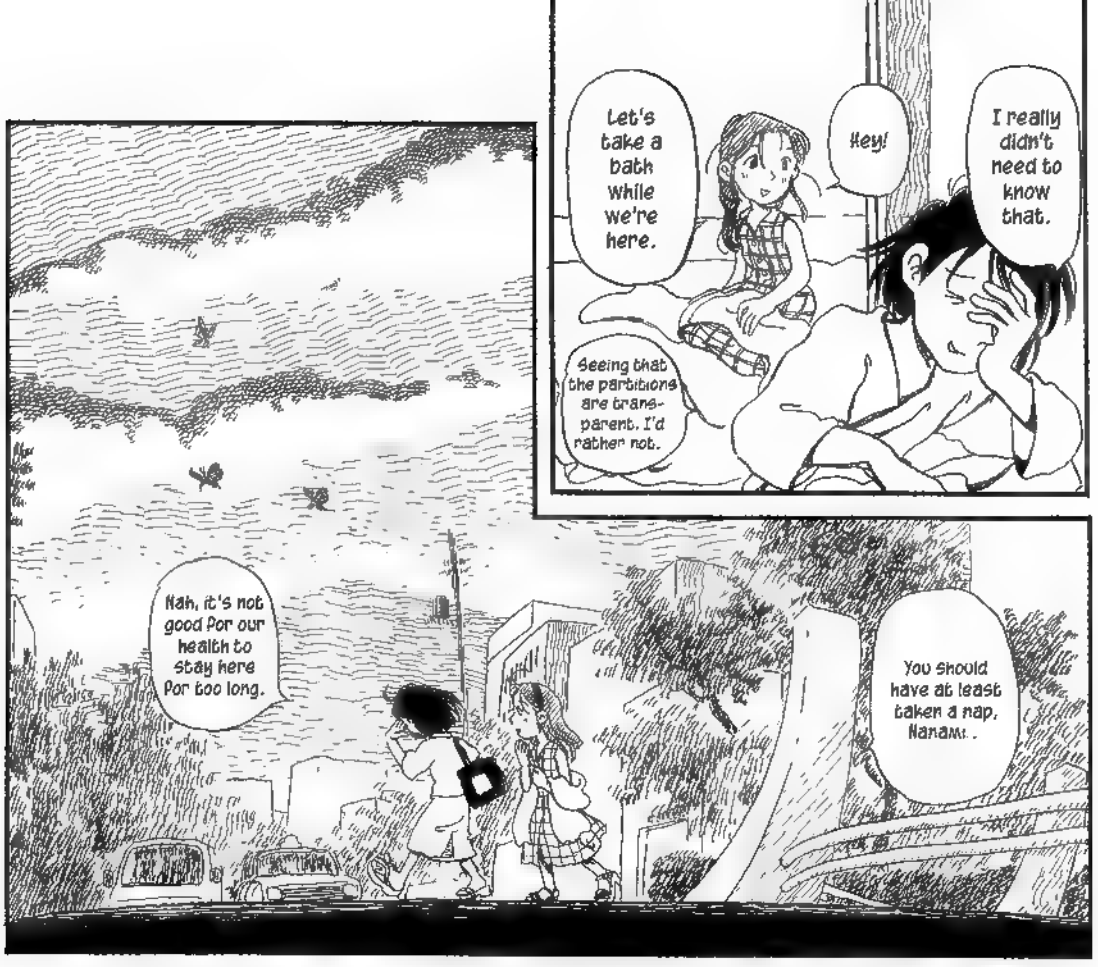
That's all? You sure took your time...
The Peace Memorial Museum ...
What places did you visit?
I snitched em...
I've got peaches, too
...
Have you had lunch? I bought some rice balls.
There you are!
WHOAA!
BERCH!!
cough cough
T-Toko, you OK?!
...
EXIT

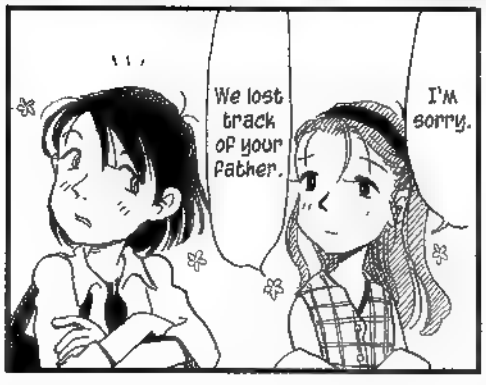

HOTEL KONO
...
HOTEL
Let's su...
Rest xxx
Overnight Stay xxx
WELCOME
...
G-give me a room, please ...
203
203

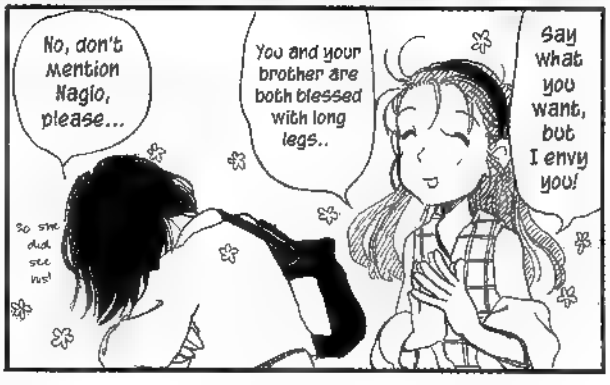

Na...
Mi...
Y-you're back...? Na...
Mom. ?
Huh?
Take off your shirt I'll wash it for you...
No, it's OK.
I'll do it myself.
AH!
I'm sorry, Nanami ...

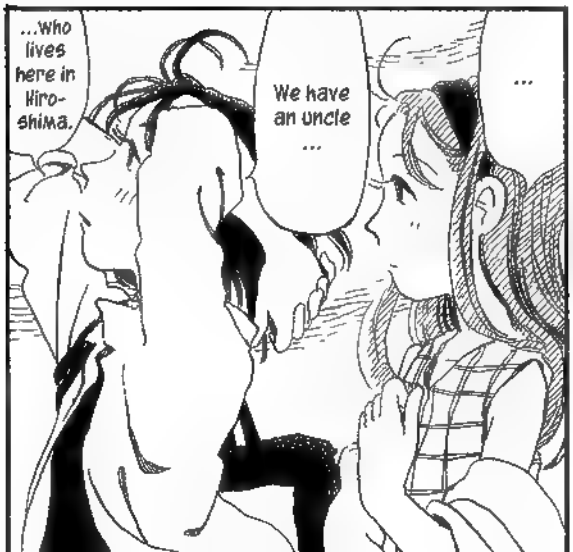
I only had to imagine those people could have been my friends or my family and it was enough to make me feel sick...
I guess I'm a failure as a nurse...
..
How about you put on one of those?
...
...
Your reaction is probably the most natural one.
That has nothing to do with it.
Yeah, occasionally.
Do you happen to visit this kind of hotel?
Say, Tôko...
There should be a hair-dryer, too...

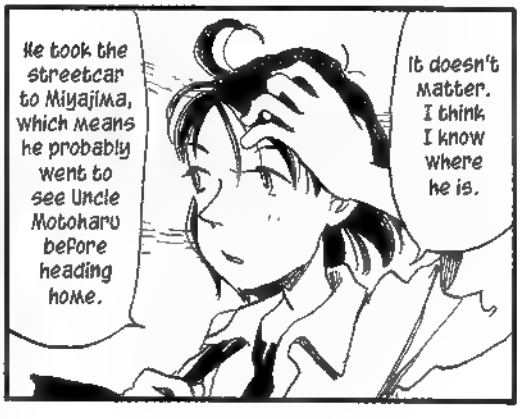
(1) They are in a "love hotel," a type of hotel that rents rooms to couples either by the hour or overnight.


Let's take a bath while we're here.
Hey!
I really didn't need to know that.
Seeing that the partitions are transparent. I'd rather not.
Nah, it's not good for our health to stay here for too long.
You should have at least taken a nap, Nanami.


We lost track of your father.
I'm sorry.


No, don't mention Nagio, please...
You and your brother are both blessed with long legs..
Say what you want, but I envy you!
So she did see us!


...Who lives here in Hiroshima.
We have an uncle ...
...


He took the streetcar to Miyajima, which means he probably went to see Uncle Motoharu before heading home.
It doesn't matter. I think I know where he is.

TABA BOUTIQUE
Clothes & Accessories
Wanted: Seamstress
Lodging Available
Futaba
My brother's getting married soon, so I think it's time for me to stand on my own feet
Wanted: Seamstress
Lodging Available
Futaba
Since 60 Years in Business
FUTABA FASHION
I see ...
Do you want to come live with us, Kiyoka?
Hmm...
There's a sewing machine here.
And you'd be a big help to Mama.
I'm really indebted to you, you know?
See, I was apart from my mother for so long that it wasn't easy to be living with her again. Your presence has helped a lot.

...
...
Um...
And me, too... I...
You really have it in mind to wed a hibakusha?
Good night.
I don't know...
Why am I still alive ...?
How are you going to explain this to your adoptive parents, the Ishikawas?
Why do you think I had you evacuated and adopted?
Mama ...
I can't bear watching people I know dying from the bomb anymore...

(1) An often pejorative term to describe an atomic bomb victim.

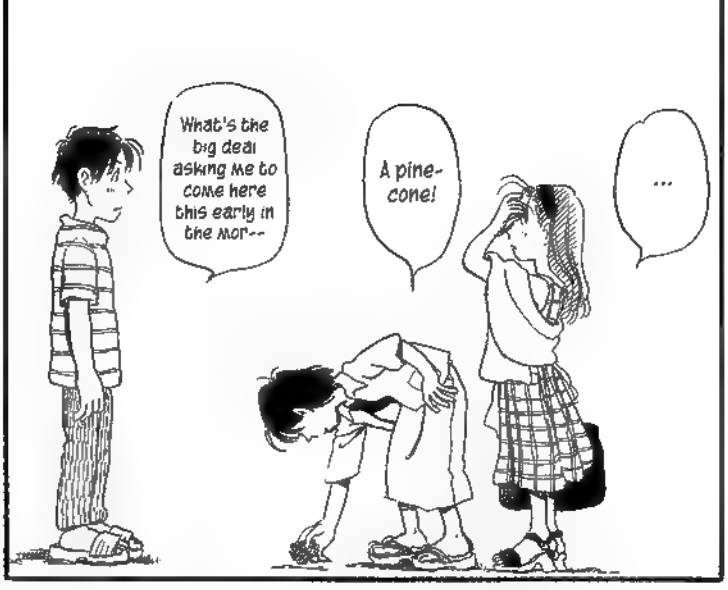
...
...
...
We're not on the same bus!
But I didn't have the courage to do it, and so I ended up tagging along with you instead.
I was on my way to meet someone last night.
You know, Nanami...
We didn't have to disguise ourselves!
Oh man!

I'm sure both my mom and dad will love Hiroshima once they see the city.
But I'm very glad that I came here.
The next time, I will come with my parents.
...
...
Apparently, yes.
You sleeping?
Tôko ...?
When my grandma died at 80, nobody even brought up the bomb as possible cause anymore.
My mom was 38 when she died, but nobody could tell us if it was because of the bomb or not.
I...
And yet there're still people who are convinced that Nagio and I could still die from the bomb's effects one day.

I pretended to forget we ever met each other in the first place.
NO SMOKING
Hello, it's me...

Oh man!
Seibu Railway
Arayakushamae Station
(South Exit)
JR East
東京駅
Tōkyō Station
Yaesu Central Exit
Oh man!
Water Tower Park
Oh man!
...
Thanks, Nanami. I can go home alone from here.
You've already repeated that a dozen times now.
I don't recall the neighborhood being this small!
Oh!
Ouch!
Sis!!

What ?!
Nagio, that girl lent me money. Pay her back, will you?
All right. I'm going home.


What's the big deal asking me to come here this early in the mor--
A pine-cone!
...

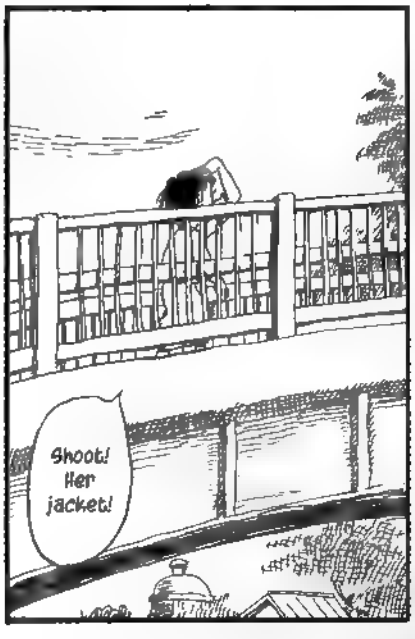
Where did you spend the night, anyway?
You didn't go home.
You handed in your notice

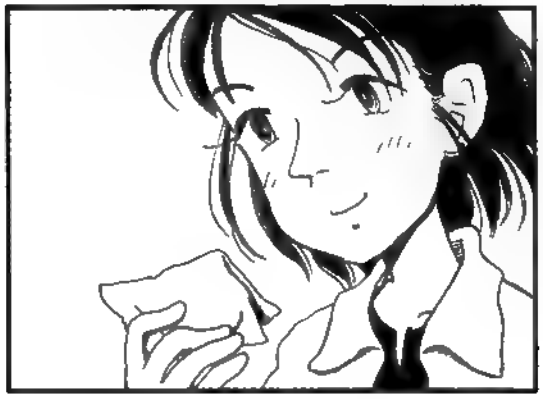
...with someone like her?
Where'd you go...
someone like me?

you twit!

Jesus ...

Of course!
The neighborhood only seems smaller to me 'cause the cherry trees have grown larger!


Shoot! Her jacket!

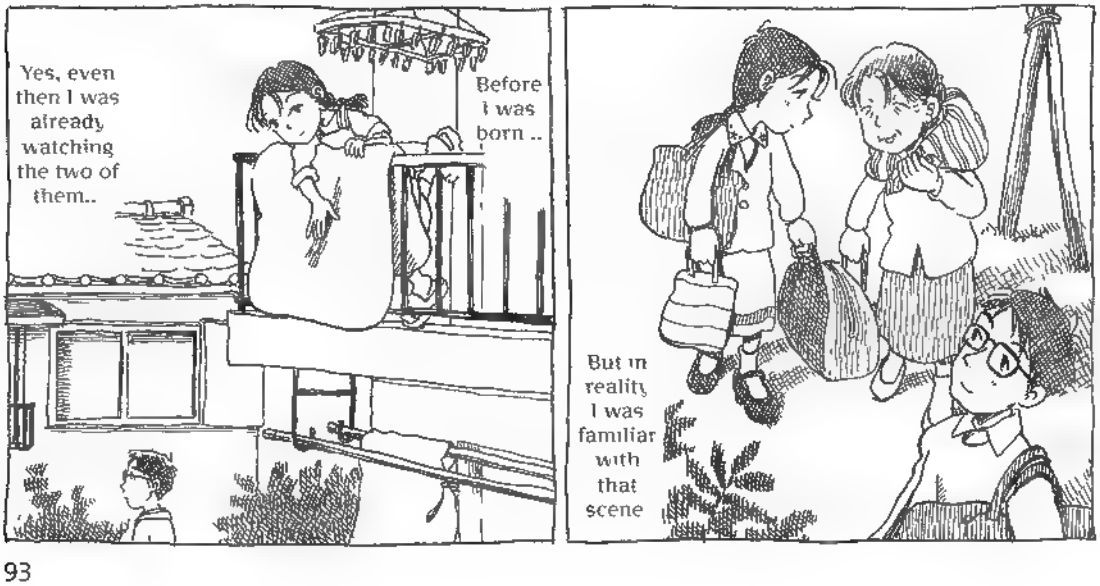


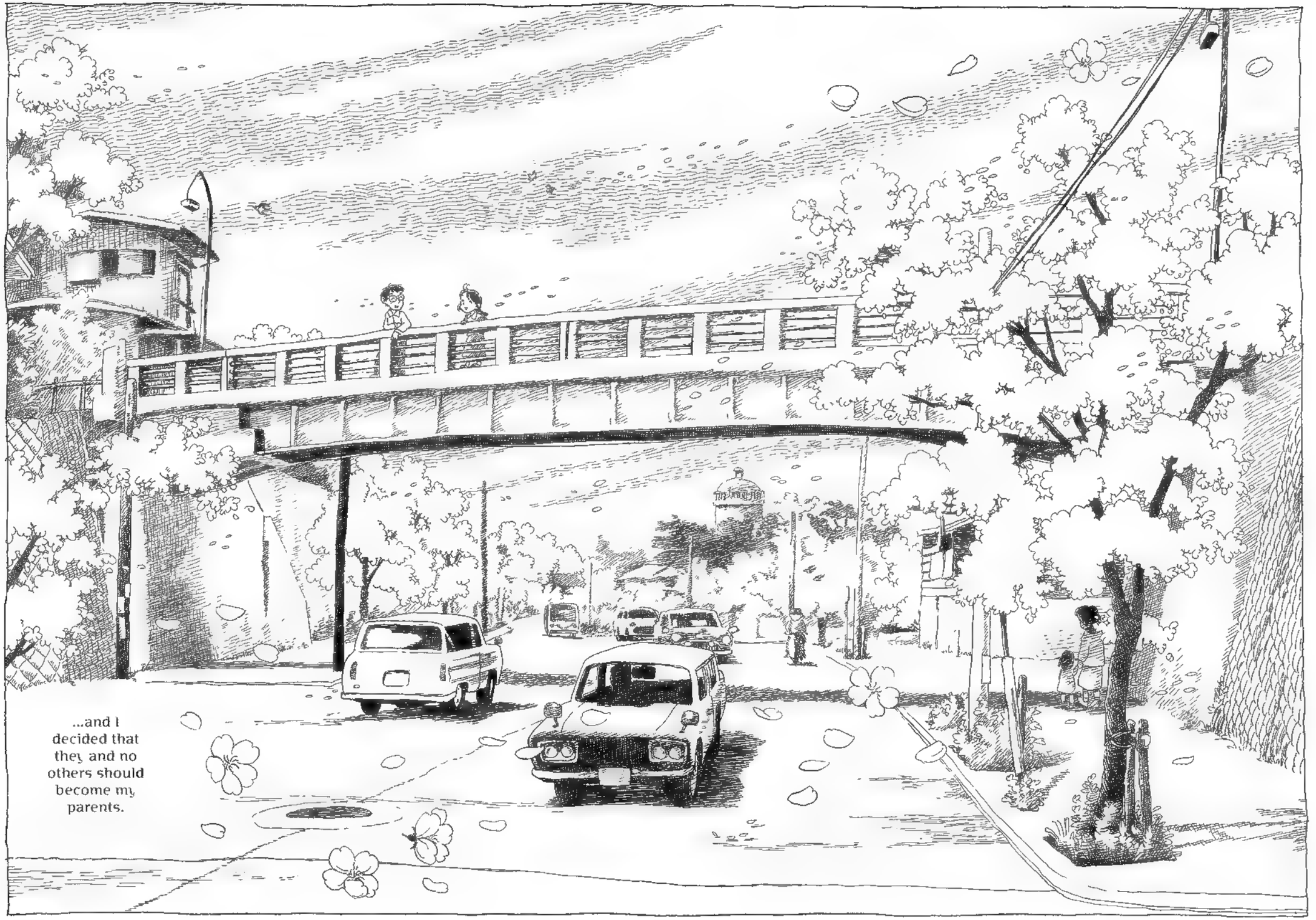
I'll return it to her the next time we meet.
Oh well...

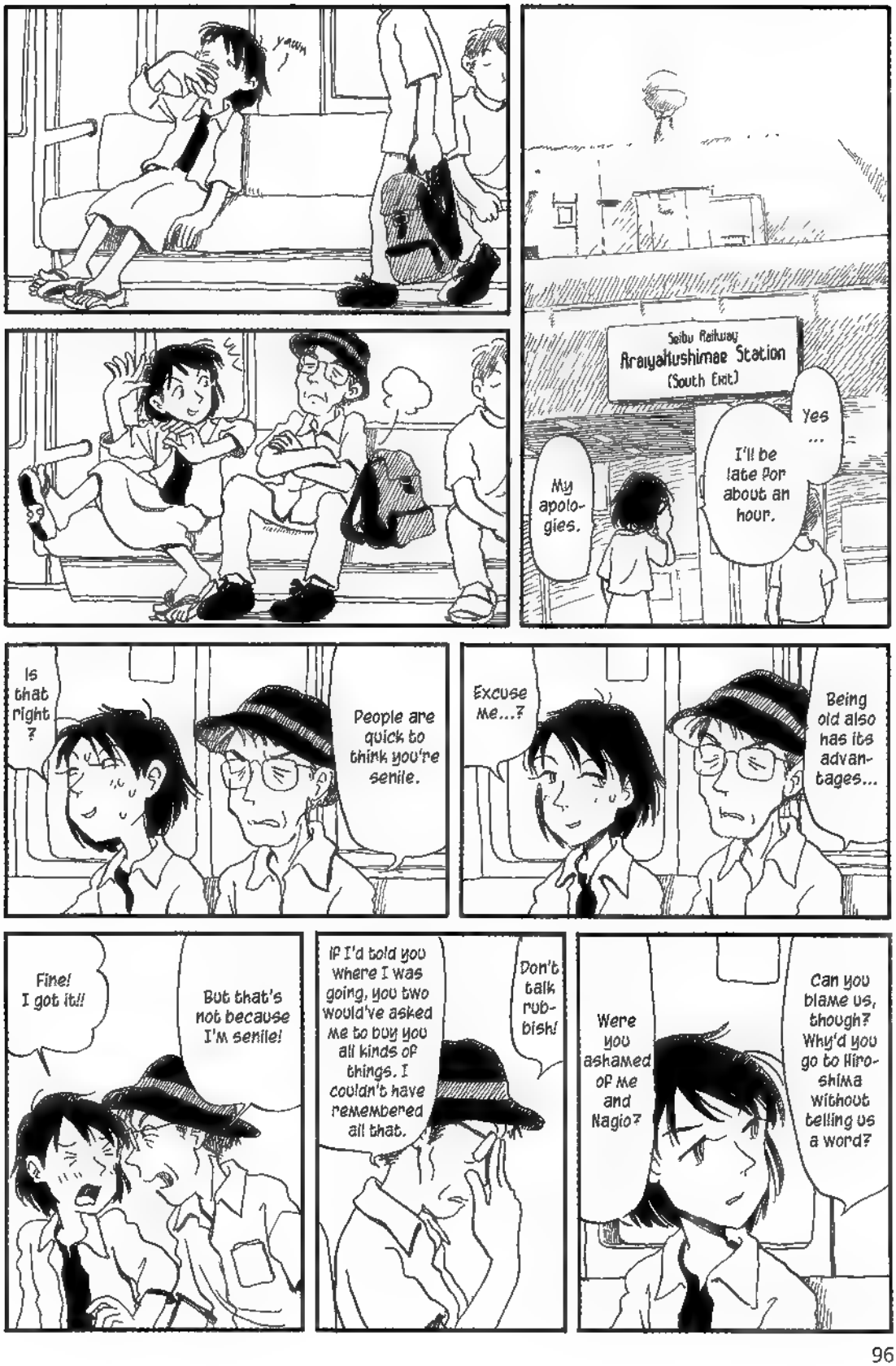
You're watching us, aren't you?
Ms. Tyko Tone
Nagio Ishikawa
MOM...

I see..
I'm thinking about taking Mama with me.
What?
You've been trans-ferred?
Yes, to Tokyo
And I'd like to have a wife by my side
...
...
"When people share the same concerns, it's much better for them to stick together rather than being apart," that's what my mother said, and...
I'll be 34 soon.
I...
Nobody passed by.
...
...
It's decided. I'll propose to the first woman who passes by here in the next three seconds
Fine...

I understood you. I said that on purpose.
Asahi ...
Do I have to spell out everything for you, Kyoka?
No, that was very sweet.
Shouldn't I have done that?
You're putting on such airs.
You act like those people on TV.
You gave me time to hide myself.
It was probably my mother who told me that story


Yes, even then I was already watching the two of them..
Before I was born ..
But in reality I was familiar with that scene


...and I decided that they and no others should become my parents.


yawn
Seibu Railway
Arayakitushimae Station
(South Exit)
My apologies.
I'll be late for about an hour.
Yes ...
Is that right?
People are quick to think you're senile.
Excuse me...?
Being old also has its advantages...
Fine! I got it!!
But that's not because I'm senile!
If I'd told you where I was going, you two would've asked me to buy you all kinds of things. I couldn't have remembered all that.
Don't talk rubbish!
Were you ashamed of me and Nagio?
Can you blame us, though? Why'd you go to Hiroshima without telling us a word?

She reminds me a bit of Mom.
Really?
Er... I mean the girl who lived next to us in our old neighborhood.
I was spending some time with Toko Tone...
...
She and Nagio might be getting married.
Hey, Dad...
Nanami ...
Do you want to know why I went to Hiroshima?
...
Oh, come on! If anyone has reason to cry, it's me! It's not my fault that I take after you!
A 28-year-old woman and you don't even go out during weekends!
sniff sniff sniff
I'm more concerned about you than him!

I went to meet the people who used to know her and we talked about old times.
This year will see the 49th anniversary of my elder sister's death, the one who lived the longest.
Actually, I think you resemble her, Nanami.
You must try to find happiness for yourself. Otherwise my sister will be very sad.
If you like, I could introduce you to my gō-kon (1) friends.
Huh ?!
That's another detail I'd rather not know!
LOCAL
TANASHI

(1) A mixer. A gathering over food and drink at which single (and usually young) people can meet people of the opposite sex.

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Hiroshima City *Hibaku 50-shûnen - Zusetsu Sengo Hiroshimashi-shi - Machi to Kurashi no 50-nen* (50th Anniversary of the Atomic Bombing - Diagrams - The Post-War History of Hiroshima City - 50 Years of Life and the City)

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Nakajô, Kazuo *Genbaku to Sabetsu* (The A-Bomb and Discrimination), Asahi Shinbunsha

Nakazawa, Keiji *Kuroi Ame ni Utarete* (Hit by the Black Rain), *Hadashi no Gen* (Barefoot Gen), Horupu Shuppan (Collection of Keiji Nakazawa's Peace-Themed Comics)

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Oe, Kenzaburo *Hiroshima Nooto* (Hiroshima Notes), Iwanami Shinsho

Ôta, Yôko *Yûnagi no Machi to Hito to* (With the People from the Town of Evening Calm), *Shikabane no Machi* (The Town of Corpses), San'ichi Shobô (Yôko Ôta Work Collection)

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Yamashiro, Tomoe and other authors *Genbaku ni Ikite* (Living under Bombardment), Nihon Tosho Center (Record of the Atomic Bombing - III)

Reader's Notes

1. World Conferences Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs (page 8)
One of the top issues in Japan in 1955. The first conference was held in Hiroshima on August 6.

2. "Otomi-san" (page 9)
A cheerful hit song from 1954 with vocals by Hachirô Kasuga. Incidentally, the depiction of Minami commuting to work barefoot is inspired by an anecdote from Hachirô Kasuga's autobiography that is part of my father's book collection. It tells of Kasuga's wife and the times they lived in poverty.

3. "The Town of Evening Calm" (Yûnagi no machi) (page 9/70)
"The Town of Evening Calm"'s story takes place in Hiroshima in 1955. Minami and her mother live in a settlement named Aioidoori (not to be confused with the Aioidoori of today) that lies to the north of the Atomic Bomb Dome. Often called the "Atomic Bomb Slum," the area was primarily inhabited by people who lost both their house and land due to the reconstruction plan that came into effect after the blast. This settlement disappeared in 1977. Today, you can find a green tract of land there instead, like the one seen on page 70.

4. Kanayama and Hasegawa (page 13)
Both were players for the Hiroshima Carp. Jirô Kanayama, who was an infielder, compiled 400 stolen bases in total by September 1955. One month before, pitcher Ryôhei Hasegawa would record his 100th win. Neither Minami nor Uchikoshi is a baseball fan per se. The Hiroshima people have always felt this close to the Carp. Everyone loves them. However, there was no live baseball coverage on television and radio back in those days. People usually learned the outcome of a match the next day through the paper. Yet this could not keep the fans from getting wild with excitement. The power of imagination the people back then had was a wonderful thing.

5. Marilyn Monroe (page 15)
She and her husband Joe Dimaggio visited Hiroshima in 1954. Baseball pro Dimaggio even gave the Carp a few lessons in baseball.

6. *Kayô Game* (The Pop Song Game) (page 16)
The full title is *Meishoku Kayô Game* (The Cheerful Pop Song Game). It was a popular commercial radio program on Friday night.

7. Rikidôzan (page 18)
There was a pro wrestling match at the Prefectural Multipurpose Ground on August 19, 1955. Among the participants were also Azumafuji, Kôkichi Endô, [Jesse] Ortega, Curtis [Iaukea] and [Bob] Orton.

8. Concrete Bridge Railings for Hiroshima's Peace Park (page 2/21)
Designed by Isamu Noguchi—an American of Japanese ancestry—in 1951, the two concrete bridge railings are installed at the southern end of the Peace Park. I only learned of this detail afterwards, but apparently the railing on the Heiwa Ôhashi Bridge (Peace Big Bridge) is called "Ikiru" (to live) [originally "Tsukuru" (to build)], while the one on the Nishi Heiwa Ôhashi Bridge (West Peace Big Bridge) is called "Shinu" (to die) [originally "Yuku" (to depart)]. Because of their overly abstract forms, the railings were not received very well at the time.

9. Shin Ôhashi Bridge (New Big Bridge) (page 22)
The previous name of the Nishi Heiwa Ôhashi Bridge (West Peace Big Bridge). The bridge is bigger in reality.

10. Atomic Bomb Dome (page 27)
One thing I noticed while drawing this comic was that the Atomic Bomb Dome had been decaying and getting smaller with each photo taken since the blast. There were a lot of people who voted for the building's demolition because its very existence reminded them of that day's devastation. However, Hiroshima City Council eventually decided in 1966 to preserve the monument for posterity as a reminder of the nuclear disaster. Although this building was still nothing more than a ruin by the time Minami lived, I drew it as a symbol for the courage of the many atomic bomb victims who managed to overcome their emotional conflict and opted for the preservation.

11. "Tsuki ga Tottemo Aoi Kara" (Since the Moon Is So Blue) (page 30)
A popular song released in May 1955 with vocals by Tsuzuko Sugawara. The lyrics Uchikoshi sings are part of the song's first verse, Minami's are from the third one.

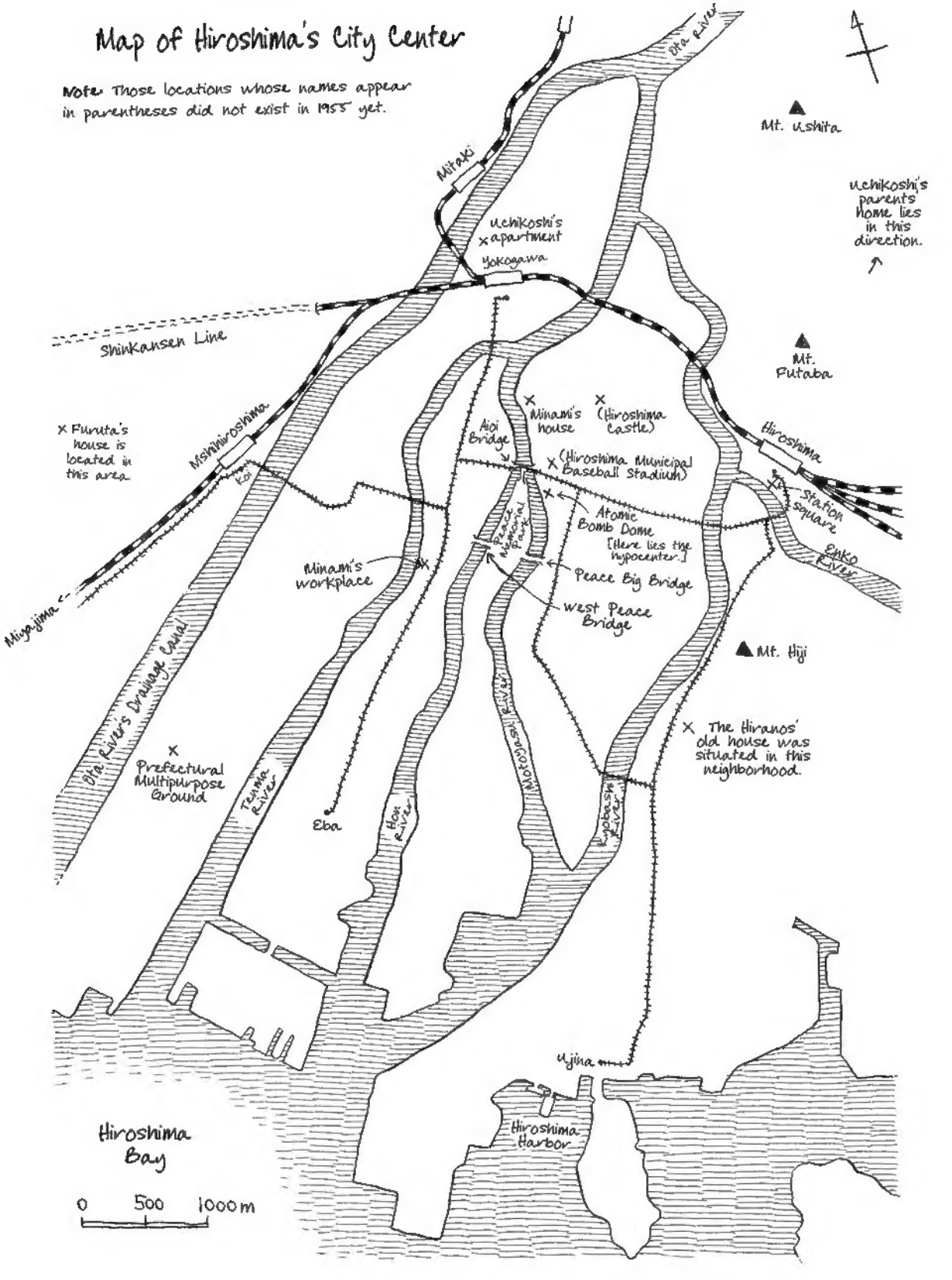
12. About Radiation Damages (page 31)
It is not unusual for the symptoms of radiation sickness to manifest themselves many years after initial contamination. Minami's lethal condition is simply due to the fact that she was exposed to the radiation ten years ago. Also, let me add the following as this detail is inadequately explained in the story: It is morning when Minami's aunt and her brother arrive in Hiroshima from Mito by the limited express train. The "evening calm," as its name suggests, does not occur until evening. However, since Minami herself is blind, she must have wrongly thought that it is evening.

13. The Water Tower (page 37)
The first part of "The Country of Cherry Blossoms" (Sakura no Kuni) is set in Tokyo's Nakano ward in 1987. In the picture's background, you can see a feed water tank called "The Water Tower." Apparently it was built at the beginning of the Showa era (1926-1989).

14. Katayamabashi (page 39)
This overpass is built over Nakano Avenue which is lined with cherry trees.

15. Professional Baseball (page 54)
The second part of "The Country of Cherry Blossoms" takes place in summer 2004, just when the controversy over the move to the one-league system broke out. Incidentally, the Hiroshima Carp did not perform very well during those past few years.

16. The Cemetery (page 66)
In Hiroshima, when you pay close attention, you will spot many gravestones bearing the date "August 6, 1945." They are joined by a large number of others which are dated within a few months after the day in question. It is a heart-breaking sight.


Map of Hiroshima's City Center
Note: Those locations whose names appear in parentheses did not exist in 1955 yet.
Ota River
Mt. Ushita
Uchikoshi's parents' home lies in this direction.
Mitaki
Uchikoshi's apartment
Yokogawa
Shinkansen Line
Mt. Futaba
Furuta's house is located in this area.
Nishihiroshima
Koi
Minami's house
(Hiroshima Castle)
Aioi Bridge
(Hiroshima Municipal Baseball Stadium)
Hiroshima
Station Square
Atomic Bomb Dome
[Here lies the hypocenter.]
Peace Memorial Park
Minami's workplace
Peace Big Bridge
West Peace Bridge
Enko River
Miyajima
Mt. Hiji
Ota River's Drainage Canal
The Hiranos' old house was situated in this neighborhood.
Prefectural Multipurpose Ground
Tenma River
Motoyasu River
Eba
Hon River
Enokawa River
Ujina
Hiroshima Harbor
Hiroshima Bay
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